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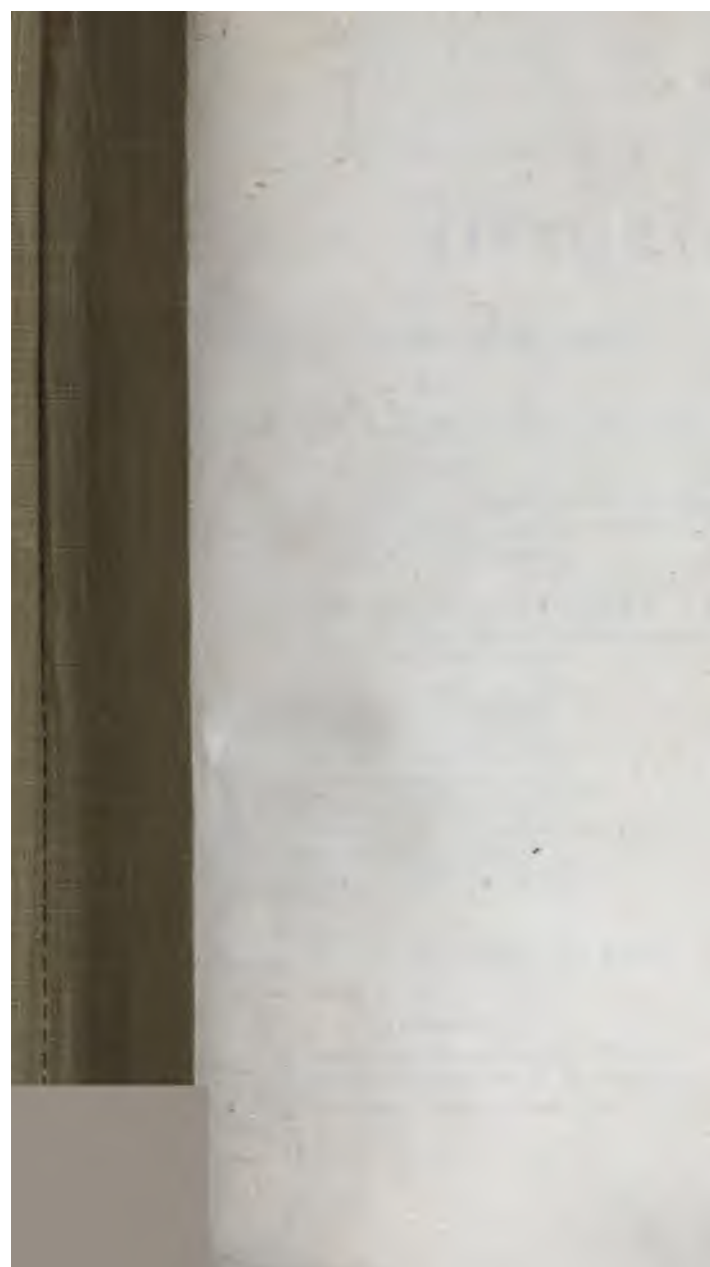
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Thomas Francis  
THE  
HEROINES  
OF  
WELSH HISTORY:

COMPRISING  
Memoirs and Biographical Notices  
OF THE  
CELEBRATED WOMEN OF WALES,

ESPECIALLY  
THE EMINENT FOR TALENT, THE EXEMPLARY IN CONDUCT,  
THE ECCENTRIC IN CHARACTER, AND THE CURIOUS  
BY POSITION, OR OTHERWISE;

BY  
T. J. LLEWELYN PRICHARD.

*Author of "The Adventures and Vagaries of Twm Shon Catty," Editor of  
"The Cambrian Wreath," etc., etc.*

---

Hail Ladies of Cymru with loveliness blest,  
Fair Sina the faithful, the beautiful Nest,  
Young Morvid of Mona, unfading thy wreath,  
And gallant Gwenllïan's who battled till death.  
Mevanwy the maid of Llangollen of old,  
And Tydvil the martyr, your tales have been told;  
Poor ill-fated Bronwen here Pity records,  
While Fflew'r's base abduction drew thousands of swords.  
Ellen th' armipotent shines in our sphere  
And Lucy of Penal, the fond and sincere!  
Beauties, and Martyrs, and Heroines—your tales  
As Glory's rays shine round the Genius of Wales.

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*Price, Bound in Cloth, Seven Shillings and Sixpence.*

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DEDICATION.

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TO  
THE VIRTUOUS VOTARIES  
OF  
TRUE WOMANHOOD,  
IN ALL  
ITS GRACES, PURITY, AND EXCELLENCE  
AS CONTRA-DISTINGUISHED FROM  
THE FANTASTIC FOOLERIES AND ARTIFI-  
CIAL CHARACTERISTICS  
OF  
FINE LADYISM  
IN THE MIDDLE WALKS OF LIFE,  
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED  
BY THEIR ARDENT ADMIRER,  
THE AUTHOR.

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## PREFACE.

[NOT TO BE PASSED OVER UNREAD.]

As Prefaces are not always honored with a perusal, and as *this especial one* involves a question or two interesting to the reader, I have deemed it necessary, for a moment, to bar and obstruct his passage to these Memoirs, with the above unusual heading; which however, if fairly entertained, I trust will be found neither impertinent nor unprofitable.

Certain parties in our principality, who may be designated THE FANATICS OF WELSH NATIONALITY, have somewhat pertinaciously harped upon the question *why* I have written both this work and my "Adventures and Vagaries of Twm Shon Catty" in the English rather than the Welsh vernacular, I might reply, although from my childhood acquainted with both languages, that a long residence in England, and a partiality for its language and literature had decided my preference. Such an announcement however would only provoke a rejoinder on the comparative antiquity, originality, and other imputed merits of the Welsh that would prove as interminable as utterly unprofitable. Therefore, as a general reply to all such inquiries, in addition to my averment of the decided preference which I shall ever entertain for the English, I beg leave to suggest the following considerations. In a commercial view of the question I have endeavoured to profit by the experience of others, who, to their sorrow have discovered that Welsh readers and book buyers are so very circumscribed in number that in these times, both authors and publishers are severe losers by such experiments as publishing books in the Welsh language. One of the latest failures in such an attempt has been that of the translator and publisher of the very meritorious work, "Chambers's Information for the People," which fell from the press almost *still born*. To a certain extent the same may be said of the Welsh translation of "Knight's Penny Magazine." These are ominous and veritable signs of the times; and should become an emphatic warning to all enthusiastic speculators in the resuscitate of the dying language of ancient Britain.

The sound philosophical opinion put forth in the following passage (with which I heartily coincide), may go far towards setting at rest the question as to the merit or mischief of reviving in literature an antiquated and degenerated language, over which Time

is gradually expanding his lethean hand, and suggesting for it after an honorable fulfilment of its long-enduring mission, an eternity of repose. The quotation is from a letter of the eminent critic, William Taylor, of Norwich, the correspondent of the late Dr. Southey.

"It is surely more desirable that the Low Dutch should sink into a provincial jargon and gradually disappear, than that it should be polished into a classical language. It is already the misfortune of modern Europe to possess too many cultivated dialects. The Literati, who would keep pace with the progress of the general mind, must be acquainted with many of them, and the emergence of every new nation into learning and refinement, multiplies the elementary toil of each student. It is therefore important that the smallest possible number of leading languages should contain the whole stock of information and amusement; and that inconsiderable districts, such as Holland, Denmark, Piedmont, and Wales, should not endeavour to immortalize their respective phraseology, but *contentedly slide into the speech of the larger contiguous nations.*" The critic of the Athenæum remarks on this, "We would recommend this passage to the attention of those who would wish to *revive* the Irish language, as a medium of instruction for the people."

In the Preface to Parry's Cambrian Plutarch he remarks:—"It is not sufficient that Welshmen have at last learnt to appreciate the value of their ancient literary remains, whether of History or Poetry. In order to do full justice to their national literature, and to make it an object of interest to others, they should divest it of its native garb (the Welsh language), and present it to the world in a form more qualified to allure the general reader; namely, an English costume." Acting on these suggestions I here present the public with the following work; and proceed to account for some of the materials of which it is composed.

In the year 1824 the late Jonathan Harris, bookseller, of Carmarthen, favored me with the loan of an old black letter edition of Caradoc of Llancarvon's History of Wales, translated by Dr. Powell, interleaved throughout, and copiously full of manuscript notes of great value, evidently the result of very extensive antiquarian reading. Whoever had been the former owner of that book and the writer of the notes (of whom Mr. Harris possessed no clue, having purchased it among many others at various sales), he appears to have had access to more matter connected with Welsh history than any man, living or dead, whom it has been my fortune to be

acquainted with, and to have made the best possible use of the treasures which came in his way; unless, indeed, instead of placing the amount of his reading and observation in notes and comments, he had himself written a history of his country, for which great task he appears to have been well qualified. The initials I. L. appeared in various parts of these notes; and from the peculiarity of the old fashioned hand-writing, browned by time or bad ink, and exhibiting occasionally the evidence of the tremulous nerves of advanced life, although its general style was stiff, firm, and formal, approaching that of the ancient engrossing law hand—gave tokens that the writer, whoever he may have been, was decidedly an old man; probably past the period for such a laborious undertaking as the production of a national history, unless by the aid of an amanuensis. I copied many of these notes and comments, which included several legends and much traditionary matter, fully intending, on my re-visit to Carmarthen, to transcribe the whole, or purchase the book, if the owner would part with it. On my return however, most unfortunately, the work was no longer to be found, nor could Mr. Harris give any account how he lost it to the day of his death. Ever since I have deeply to regret my omission in copying the whole while I had the opportunity.

The information derived from those manuscript notes has enabled me to give a fuller account of several of these Heroines of Welsh History than I could otherwise have accomplished with the aid of all which I had collected, either in the British Museum or the private libraries to which I have had access in search of materials for the foundation of this work. I have noticed in these Memoirs, as they respectively occurred, in what instances I have used these Notes; especially in those of Gwenllïan, daughter of Griffith ab Cynan and queen of Prince Griffith ab Rhys ab Tewdwr, and of the Lady Nest, wife of Bernard de Newmarch. From the same authority I derived some interesting traditionary matter relative to "Mary Llwyd;" a barbarous relic of which Heroine has been familiarized to the public, by the annual custom of parading about a *Skeleton Horse's Head*, by a set of low mummery, through the towns and villages of the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan, the "Gwent and Morganwg" of the ancient divisions of the principality.

Having now to refer exclusively to the present publication as it stands, I therefore solicit attention to the following particulars. At the commencement of the undertaking I expected the quantity which I had prepared for the press would be comprised in a single volume of about six hundred pages, or six numbers at one shilling



each, as promised to the patrons of the work. However, the most important part of this announcement is, that I committed an error in my calculation; for I now find that my written matter, when reduced into printed type will run to *double the quantity* originally intended for making the Work complete. Consequently, I have a similar portion to offer for a *Second Volume*; so that *the question to be asked and answered is, Will the public encourage the continuation of the Work to that extent, or must it be limited to the present Volume?*

I am well assured there are many among those who have thus far patronized my book that will gladly consent to its extension; generously rejoicing in the prospect of so much additional biography of our national Female Worthies. Yet, I regret to say, there are others, so intensely imbued with the crying vice of our *Welshland* portion of Britain, a most apathetic and most discreditable indifference—not only to literature in general, and their own country's history in particular—but to every thing save and except the accumulation of property: enjoying no music but the sordid Mammon Duet produced by knocking one shilling against another—no Choral Harmony but what is produced by the rattling of coin within the craving vortex of their money-bags—that will make this small affair of mine a question of the pocket, and cause such to hesitate in incurring the expense of an additional volume; without the slightest reference to the amount of value received in exchange. To such I would say withhold this if it seems good to you—but in the end the loss may prove as much yours as my own. When once this head of mine, such as it is, is laid low (and the period is not remote), though many more gifted may arise, but you will not readily meet another so patient under your niggardly patronage—so content to walk the same path through regions so unpromising of either laurels or profit;—and the more intelligent may yet have to regret the encouragement withheld, or niggardly bestowed, from finishing a Work that their children may prize more than their dull apathetic parents. Be that as it may, for I leave the matter in the hands of Providence, having, as the homely phrase goes, *other fish to fry* and to feed upon—i.e. other works to put forth; and shall act according to the signs held out to me, either to finish or discontinue the *HEROINES OF WELSH HISTORY*.

In proof that my materials are far from approaching a state of exhaustion, and that the *Tales untold* will be as interesting in quality as abundant in quantity, I submit the following as a programme of the Memoirs which are to form the second volume:—*THE PRINCESS NEST*, daughter of Prince Griffith ab Llewelyn, and queen of

Trahaern ab Caradoc; whose amour with Fleance, the son of Banquo, originated the royal race of the Stuarts of Scotland. **THE LADY NEST, or BRECON** (daughter of the last-named), wife of Bernard de Newmarch; embracing the strange tradition explanatory of her mysterious conduct in causing her son Mahael (destined to the earldom of Hereford), to be bastardized and disinherited. **THE LADY NEST**, daughter of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, the last native lord of Glamorgan, embracing the entire account of the subjugation of Glamorgan by the Norman Knights. **MARY LLWYD**, the Heroine of the War Horse at the battle of Hirwain. **THE PRINCESS NEST**, daughter of Prince Rhys ab Tewdwr, mistress of King Henry I., mother of the learned Robert of Gloucester, and grandmother of Giraldus Cambrensis. **THE DAMES OF ABERGWYNN, or WOMEN OF FISHGUARD**, who, dressed in their red whittles, in 1797, were mistaken by the French invaders for soldiers, which created the panic that caused them to lay down their arms and yield themselves prisoners to the Welsh. **TYDVIL, THE MARTHYR** (24th daughter of Brychan Brecheiniog, the tragic close of whose life is here related in continuation of what has been already given), from whom the town of Merthyr Tydvil derives its name. **THE PRINCESS SINA, or SENENNA**, mother of Prince Llewelyn, the last native sovereign of Wales; one of the most amiable and talented of the celebrated women of Wales. **THE BEAUTIES OF MERIONETHSHIRE, or "MORWYNION GLAN MERIONETH"** ROWENA, or Alis Ronwen, daughter of Hengist, leader of the first Saxon invaders of Britain, whose fatal beauty led to the massacre of the Long Knives, and terminated in the conquest of the country by the Saxons. **THE WOMEN OF THE VALE OF CLEWYD**, including a description of that fertile and extensive valley. **THE LADIES OF LLANGOLLEN**, namely, Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honorable Miss Ponsonby; whose fanciful residence became the object of fashionable pilgrimages, as herein narrated by Madame Genlis, Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Lockhart, the humorous Matthews, the comedian, and others. **THE PRINCESS MORVYTH**, daughter of the last Silurian Sovereigns. **ST. TEGIA**, patroness of the churches of Llandegley. **ST. URSULA** and the eleven thousand Virgins. **ST. WINNIFRED**, patroness of the Holy Well in Flintshire. **BLANCHE PARRY**, lady of the Privie Chamber and Mistress of the Robes to Queen Elizabeth, of the Llandeileog family, near Brecon. **GRACE PARRY**, the eccentric mistress of a ferry-boat in North Wales. **LUCY WALTERS**, mistress of Charles II. and mother of the Duke of Monmouth beheaded by James II. for aspiring to the Crown. **BRIDGET JONES**,

the handsome young widow of Llanelly, celebrated by the poet Savage. LUCY LLOYD of Penal, an interesting love narrative of the 14th century. LADY WINNIFRED HERBERT, Countess of Nithisdale, whose lord being involved in the Pretender's rebellion of 1715, and condemned to suffer death in company with the rebel lords of Derwentwater and Kenmuir. She saved his life by a series of ingenious contrivances, aided by faithful Welsh servants, and ultimately exchanging clothes with him, he escaped from the Tower of London; and in the succeeding reign of George II. obtained his pardon.

Let this suffice as *a list of the principal Memoirs to come*; although there are many others of considerable interest, but, perhaps, of minor importance.

I cannot close this Preface without acknowledging my obligation to Lady Hall, of Llanover, by whose interest I obtained admission to the library of the British Museum, whence much of the matter contained in this Work has been derived. In especial terms I have also to express my gratitude to the Rev. William Jenkin Rees, rector of Cascob, not only for the personal aid which he rendered me in transcribing from the valuable books in his library, and his Manuscript History of Radnorshire, but at an unfortunate period of my life, for the hospitality of his house for many weeks while so employed, during the inclemency of a severe winter.

In conclusion I may mention, that as the peculiar dedication which I have prefixed to this Work, may excite the curiosity of many, who may wonder at my choice of ideal patronesses, while among living personages of rank one might have been selected, to whom my book might have been *more profitably* inscribed: I reply, that an Explanatory Essay respecting the characters referred to, is intended to accompany the second volume, should such an extension of the Work be called for by the Public.

T. J. LLEWELYN PRICHARD.

Swansea,  
1st Nov., 1854.

THE  
**HEROINES OF WELSH HISTORY ;**  
 OR,  
*Memoirs of the Celebrated Women of Wales.*

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**PART THE FIRST.**

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## ACTRESSES OF CELEBRITY BORN IN WALES.

**I**N the high glow of his Cambrian nationality Edward Pugh, author of "Cambria Depicta," was passionately anxious to have the fact established that Mrs. Jordan was born in Wales, as Mrs. Siddons indisputably was. He says—"my journey to this place (the village of Nantglyn, Denbighshire) was to gain, if possible, either an affirmative or a negative to a report in circulation in this country, that the celebrated Thalia, of our day, was born in a respectable ancient house, half-a-mile from the village called Plas yn Nantglyn; but I have met with no satisfactory or decisive account. But several old people assert positively, that Miss Bland (the proper name) was the daughter of a Mr. Jordan Bland, one of three brothers, Irishmen, many years ago residing here." Since the death of Mr. Pugh it has been irrefutably established that she really was the daughter of the above-named Mr. Jordan Bland, with the additional claim to Welsh birth, that her mother was a Pembrokeshire lady, whose maiden name was Philipps, and the residence of her family the town of Haverfordwest; that they were remotely related to the late Lord Milford, and consequently to his successor in the estate, the present Sir Richard Philipps of Picton Castle.

Mrs. Siddons, it is well known, was born in the town of Brecon, at an inn called the Shoulder of Mutton; and the room in which she first saw the light there, is marked with an inscription, in which the claim to that honour is announced. Thus we have to boast (if comfort can be found in boasting) that Wales is the country which gave birth to two of the most perfect and wonderful actresses the world ever produced, in their respective spheres of comedy and tragedy.

An attempt to add a leaf or two to Mrs. Siddons's superabundant wreath of laurel, would appear a work of



supererogation; yet we fancy our little addenda can be weaved into the main circlet of her queenly brow, with no ungraceful effect. We remember reading of some enthusiastic admirer of this stately actress, who protested that he would as soon think of making love to the Pope as to that magnificent creature. Entertaining similar ideas of the grandeur of her bearing, we were not a little surprised to learn that in her elegant retreat, in the neighbourhood of London, she evinced tastes and habits as gentle and domestic as ever graced the mild bosom of the most retiring and *home-abiding* of the daughters of Eve; and that the stately Sarah, the "observed of all observers" on the tragic scene, was passionately fond of flowers. This feature in her character, we believe, has not been descanted upon by the eminent poet Campbell, who has considerably added to his numerous literary honours by becoming the biographer of Mrs. Siddons.

A London florist, and author of a treatise on the growth and culture of flowers,\* in advocating the Dutch taste for a particular mode of planting, says—"in some cases I am inclined to copy the Dutchman; and I would have my bed of hyacinths distinct, my tulips distinct, my anemonies distinct, my ranunculuses, my pinks, my carnations distinct; and even my beds of double-blue violets, and dwarf larkspur distinct; to say nothing of hedgerows of different sorts of roses. Independent of the less trouble you have in cultivating them when kept separate, you have, as I have said before, *beauty in masses*; and you have likewise their fragrance and perfume so concentrated, that they are not lost in the air, but powerfully inhaled whenever you approach them."

"Mrs. Siddons, the celebrated tragic actress, is a great admirer of this mode of planting, and fond of contemplating this "*beauty in masses*." She adopted this style of gardening at her late residence on the Harrow-road. One favourite flower with her was the *viola amœna*, the pansy,† or common

\* Thomas Hogg.

† Pansy, from *panacea*, derived from the Greek, and signifying "heal-all." Although "*heart's-ease*" has become the name by which it is known among the people of England, we frequently heard it called "*love in vain*" (doubtless derived from its Shakspearean title of "*love in idleness*") by the cottagers of the west of England.

purple heart's-ease ; and this set with unsparing profusion all round her garden."\*

No devotee at the shrine of Shakspeare can be at a loss to discover whence our great actress derived her taste for flowers. The source of her inspiration, as the high priestess of Melpomene, was also the altar at which she formed her fosculous attachment ; and well might that be, for what poet ever wrote so frequently, so wisely, or so so well, of flowers, as the great master who drew forth the homage of her heart and soul ? Her special patronage of the pansy, that peculiar gem in the treasury of Flora, was doubtless suggested by the singular notice of it, which occurs in the celebrated passage of "Midsummer's Night's Dream," so frequently a point of contention among commentators, for the imputed political allusions which it contains.

*Oberon*.—My gentle Puck, come hither : Thou rememb'rest  
 Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
 And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,  
 Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath  
 That the rude sea grew civil at her song ;  
 And certain stars shot madly from their spheres  
 To hear the sea-maid's music.

*Puck*.—I remember.

*Oberon*.—That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),  
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
 Cupid all arm'd ; a certain aim he took  
 At a fair vestal throned by the west,  
 And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,  
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts ;  
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon ;  
 And the imperial votress passed on,  
 In maiden meditation, fancy free.  
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :  
 It fell upon a little western flower—  
 Before, milk-white ; now purple with Love's wound—  
 And maidens call it *Love in idleness*.†

\* Notwithstanding their admiration of the great Sarah Siddons, the London tradesmen were fond of contrasting the economical habits of the Kembles with the liberality, or rather lavish expenditure, of the eccentric tragedian Edmund Kean ; whence the following anecdote by our florist :—"Her great and constant call for this flower, every spring, to keep the purple-bordering complete and perfect, induced the gardeners in the neighbourhood to give the name of 'Miss Heart's-ease,' to her managing handmaid, who used to chaffer for it, in the true spirit of hard and thrifty dealing."

† The juice of this flower was to lave the eyelids of Titania, queen of the fairies, while sleeping, to act as a charm, so that she might fall in love with the first object she might behold on awakening—and this happened to be the head of an ass ; the principal source of the comic humour in "Midsummer's Night's Dream."

But as this passage involves more important matter than what relates to this flower, and as some of our readers may not have met with Warburton's interpretation of its mystery, the insertion of it here may not be altogether out of place. Finding that "the fair vestal throned by the west," could be no other than Queen Elizabeth, that discovery suggested to him that the poet had in view some other public characters of that period; and one especially whom he aimed to eulogise, but dared not do so openly, whence this singular mode of introducing covert praise, which, if noticed, might be explained away; as it fairly admits of both the obviously poetic, as well as the hidden meaning. He decided that the "mermaid," was Mary Queen of Scots; and the "dolphin," her husband the French Dauphin: "uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath, &c.," referred to Mary's eloquence and skill in music; and the "certain stars," to the English nobility who involved themselves, and perished in her cause.

Our florist remarks further on Mrs. Siddon's gardening peculiarities: "her gardeu was remarkable in another respect, and might with great propriety be styled a garden of ever-greens, which, together with a few deciduous shrubs, were of the most sombre, sable, and tragical cast; such as box, fir, privet, philligrea, arbor vitæ, holly, cypress, the red cedar, laurel, Irish ivy, bay-tree, arbutus daphne or spurge laurel, cneorum tricoccum, or the 'widow's wail,' the branches and flowers of which, according to Pliny, were carried by the Roman matrons in their funeral processions.

'Purpores spargam flores.'

VIRGIL.

The only part of the year in which it could be viewed with any degree of satisfaction, was the winter, as giving rise to a pleasing association of ideas, in beholding these retain their green verdure and clothing, at a time when the rest of the surrounding trees were stripped, naked, and bare."

## Alice, Countess of Clare,

WIDOW OF RICHARD FITZGILBERT EARL OF CLARE, AND  
SISTER OF RANULPH EARL OF CHESTER.

IN the year 1135, the thirty-third and last of the reign of Henry I., and the first of King Stephen, during the successful career of the Welsh princes in recovering the independence of their country, from the usurpation of the Normans, an atrocious event took place, which has been related at large in the memoir of the princess Gwenllïan. This was the beheading of a lady, the princess last named, wife of the prince of South Wales, and daughter of the prince of North Wales, by a Norman knight named Maurice de Londres, whose fortune it was to take her prisoner, at Kidwelly, in Carmarthenshire, while leading an army against him, in the absence of her husband. An act like this, "without precedent even in these times," rather calls in question the vaunted chivalry and "gentle blood" of these Norman marauders, so partially cited by Warrington, in contradistinction to the imputed ferocity of the Welsh.

This additional reference to that event is made here previous to introducing the following account of a far lighter evil, said to have befallen a Norman lady at this very period, treated by Warrington, however, as if meriting the highest consideration of a national historian, then professedly writing a history of Wales. By a candid examination of his narrative, and comments on it, we hold that this author stands self-convicted of partialities and antipathies, intolerable in a historian. The following is his account of the perils and rescue of the countess of Clare:—

"In the course of these events, Richard earl of Clare, to whom the territory of Cardigan had been given by Henry, was murdered by Iorwerth, the brother of Morgan of Caerlleon, as he was riding through a forest, enjoying the pleasure of music, and without suspicion of an enemy. His

widow, the countess of Clare, and sister to the earl of Chester, had retired into one of his castles on the murder of her husband. In this fortress, during the late campaign, she was besieged by the Welsh. The situation of this lady was truly deplorable. She was invested by an irritated enemy, and in want of provisions; the English were nearly all slain, or expelled the country; her brother was at a distance, and so employed in defending his own territories, that he could not afford her any timely relief: and what contributed to render her situation still more wretched, she had reason to expect every hour, a fate she might deem more cruel than death itself; the Welsh, like many other nations, having usually taken their female captives, even those of the highest rank, to be their concubines.\* In this dreadful state Milo Fitzwalter, who by right of his wife, the daughter of Bernard de Newmarch, was the lord of Brecknock, received orders from King Stephen to use his utmost endeavours, to set at liberty the unfortunate countess. There was so much difficulty and danger in the enterprize, that its success appeared almost impossible. A generous pity which a brave mind ever feels for weakness in distress, and the gallant spirit of chivalry, made him however attempt at every hazard, to deliver the lady out of danger. He lost no time, therefore, in marching with a chosen body of troops, through ways which were least frequented, traversing along the tops of mountains, and through the deep woods of the country, and at length having had the good fortune to arrive at the castle, unseen by the Welsh, he carried away the countess of Clare and all her retinue. An action so gallant and humane, equals many of the fanciful descriptions which are found in romance, and proves such pictures to have borne some resemblance to the manners of the feudal ages."

\* The Welsh were by no means singular, even in this island, for that species of barbarity. We read in Saxon annals that Atholbald king of the West Saxons, combined the revolting crime of incest with the lesser offence of keeping a concubine, in a manner which proved the injunction that *a man may not marry his mother or grandmother*, was not altogether a superfluous command. On his accession to the crown he kept his *stepmother*, the second wife of Ethelwulf his father (uncle of the great Alfred), in the disreputable character of a concubine, and afterwards married her in the city of Chester.

Then follows his comment on this marvellous feat. "We see not on this occasion the same gallantry of spirit in Owen and Cadwalader (Owen Gwyneth and his brother); nor in other parts of their subsequent conduct; though these princes, *it is said*,\* were highly distinguished for humanity and courteous manners."

The invidious remark respecting the want of alacrity on the part of these princes, to exert their gallantry on this occasion, would imply that Mr. Warrington expected them to forego for the time, their important national enterprize of driving out the enemies of their country, to undertake a Quixotic mission for liberating the widow of one of their most active of enemies: a man who had been sent by their arch enemy the king of England, and forced on their nation, to take possession of the estates of the ejected Welsh proprietors. Besides, at this very period, Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader were furiously engaged in avenging upon the Normans the *chivalrous* act of Maurice de Londres, who, as before mentioned, had beheaded their sister Gwenllian. It would seem that Mr. Warrington had forgotten the eulogies extorted from him by the intrepid conduct of these princes on that spirit-stirring occasion; so that the present implied censure is a direct contradiction of himself as the reader will find on referring to the close of our memoir of Gwenllian, queen of prince Griffith at Rhys. That the countess of Clare herself did not think meanly of these Welsh princes, is evident, from the circumstance that she gave her daughter in marriage, about a year after her husband's death, to the gallant and accomplished Cadwalader.

With the candour which has always distinguished his historical investigations, Theophilus Jones, the Breckonshire historian, has given two authorities for this story of the rescue of the countess of Clare, either of which was equally within the reach of Warrington; but the latter adopted that version only, which was most unfavourable to the Welsh, although the other is far more circumstantial, and

\* "*It is said*," is a favourite phrase with this historian, when compelled by its obviousness to insert any fact, honourable to the Welsh, and the reverse to their antagonists; of course implying that it is of doubtful authority, and not worthy of implicit belief.

therefore more probable, and could not fail to be preferred by any unbiassed examiner of the two narratives. We have also in this latter account, a very different story of the imputed murder of the earl of Clare.

"An old chronicle,\* by an anonymous author has preserved an exploit by Milo Fitzwalter, soon after Stephen's assuming the crown, which, if it could be depended upon, would perpetuate his courage as well as gallantry, and place him almost in the same rank with Amadis de Gaul, Orlando Furioso, or any other visionary hero of romance. Lord Lyttleton, in his life of Henry II. has erroneously referred to Giraldus Cambrensis for this anecdote; † but the story of the assistance rendered by Milo to the countess of Clare, widow of Richard Fitzgilbert, or Richard de Tonbrugge, or Clare, first earl of Hertford, is quoted by Carte, with more accuracy from the chronicle mentioned below, ‡ where we learn that this Richard was betrayed and murdered by the Welsh, at the very time when he proposed joining them in an insurrection against the king of England, and that his lady who was sister to the earl of Chester, being, soon after the death of her husband, besieged in one of his castles in Cardiganshire, with scarcely any expectations of relief, was almost miraculously saved from death, or a more ignominious fate, by the interference and bravery of Milo Fitzwalter, who with a handful of men, *at the command of King Stephen*, marched through an enemy's country, over the tops of mountains and through impervious wilds, brought her and her whole suite into England, leaving the besiegers to batter bare walls, and to plunder a deserted fortress."

The Welsh chronicle gives a very different account of the death of the earl of Clare, and the siege of his castle. In this year (1138) there was a dispute between King Stephen and his nobles, says this history, and the king laid siege to Lincoln, where they were assembled. To their

\* Gesta Regis Stephani, vol. 930.

† Warrington has repeated the error, without acknowledging his obligation to his lordship; referring as the source of his information, to Giraldus Cambrensis lltm. lib. i., cap. iv.

‡ Brut Tywysogion, history of the princes.

assistance came Robert Consul (Robert earl of Gloucester) to support the cause of his sister Maud, who had married the emperor of Germany. With Robert came also Ralph earl of Chester, and the men of Rhyvoniog and Tygengyl, and Gilbert earl of Clare, with a strong force from Dyved, and the Norman and Saxon nobility pressed hard upon the king and took him prisoner; and in that battle the valour of the Welsh was particularly conspicuous.\* In this conflict Iorworth ab Owen ab Caradoc led the van, leaving the earl of Clare in his rear. This, the earl resented highly, and soon afterwards, seeing Iorworth by the river's side fishing, he struck him a violent blow on the ear, at the same time calling him a clownish Welshman, and telling him he was totally ignorant of the manners of a gentleman, or he would not have presumed to take the lead of his superior. The Briton, though he might want politeness, certainly did not want courage, the only answer, therefore, he returned to this rude address (as far as now appears), was by laying the assailant dead at his feet, with one blow of his fist. Upon hearing of this event the Welsh immediately laid siege to the castle of Uwchtyd, in Cardiganshire, to which place the countess of Clare had retired from Carmarthen for safety, and compelled the garrison to fly for their lives.

Thus differently related are the transactions of those days by the historians of the two different countries; the reader will determine to which he will give credit. My opinion is (loath as I am to deprive the lord of Brecknock of the honour of this gallant adventure) that the whole story, as related by the *Gesta Regis Stephani*, appears to be extremely doubtful, as well as improbable, and not sufficiently authenticated. Giraldus Cambrensis, though he wrote soon after this supposed event, and though he frequently mentions the name of Milo Fitzwalter, says not a

\* The reverse appears to have been the case; Theophilus Jones states, on the authority of English history, that the Welsh were so far from distinguishing themselves in this fight (though their defeat throws little, if any, disgrace upon their national character), that being thinly clad and poorly armed, they were put to flight on the first onset of the king's troops under William D'Ypres whose coats of mail, and "ribs of steel," were impenetrable to the rude weapons of the mountaineers.



syllable of his having rescued the countess of Clare from her enemies; and the whole of this tale, unsupported as it is, except by an anonymous writer, savours too much of the marvellous. On the other hand, the name of Gilbert has been inaccurately introduced by the British historian, instead of Richard Fitzgilbert, and the latter part of the account in which the lady and the garrison, who fled into the castle for safety, are made to fly out of it, for the same purpose, into the very heart of an enemy's country, is confused, if not incredible.

The same author concludes his observations by showing that Milo Fitzwalter, as constable of all England, was residing then at Gloucester Castle, whence, if the tale be true, he must have been dispatched by King Stephen, "as he never afterwards appeared in the character of the king's friend or subject," having abandoned his cause and joined the party of the empress Maud.

To recur again to Warrington's high estimate of Milo Fitzwalter's romantic feat, even if true, is by no means surpassed by the daring and clever achievement of Kenuric Heer\* (Kenrie the tall), who liberated prince Griffith ab Cynan from an imprisonment endured for twelve years in Chester Castle, as related in the memoirs of Angharad his queen. His motives for the hazardous attempt were founded on the highest principles of patriotism, and his destruction certain, if he failed in his enterprise. His success involved great consequences of good to his country, over-run, devastated, and seized upon, by the Norman marauders miscalled knights, in the long absence of its captived prince, and his devotion to the perilous act—to succeed or die—was equal to any species of heroism on record. Yet the best eulogy which Warrington could afford to bestow on this young Welshman's achievement, consists of this brief, and not very striking sentence, when compared with the long and elaborate eulogies on Milo Fitzwalter.

"It is with pleasure we contemplate an action like this, heroic in itself, and directed by a principle of masculine virtue."

\* In Welsh written Hlr.

## ALMEDHA THE MARTYR,

TWENTY-THIRD DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG.

ALMEDHA, the twenty-third daughter of this prince, has several names assigned to her in different MSS. The Welsh designations were Elud, Elyned, and Aluned; the latter was latinized by the monks into Almeda, or Almedha. "She lived, as we are informed, at a place called Ruthin, in Glamorganshire, and suffered martyrdom upon a hill near Brecon, called Pen-ginger.\* This hill is now generally known by the name of Slwch, though part of it still retains its old appellation. Pen-ginger is a corruption of Pen cefn y Gaer, *i. e.*, the summit of the ridge of the fortification, from an old British camp, the remains of which are still visible. Not far from the camp stood the monastic house, which Giraldus Cambrensis calls a stately edifice, where Almedha is supposed to have officiated as principal, or lady abbess. It is now completely ruined, and can only be traced by tradition to a spot where a heap of stones and an aged yew tree, with a wall at its root, marks its site.† It is about a mile eastward of Brecon, on the left-hand side of the road, leading from that place to a farm house called Slwch. According to Dr. Owen Pughe, another church was consecrated to her memory, at Mold in Flintshire. She was undoubtedly the "Almedha" of Giraldus Cambrensis, who particularly notices the "Basilica" upon Pen-ginger. "This devout virgin," says he, "rejecting the proposals of an earthly prince, who sought her in marriage, and espousing herself to the eternal king, consummated her life by a triumphant martyrdom. The day of her solemnity

\* Cressy's Church History.

† In a parchment roll, in the Augmentation Office, containing a list of the possessions of the religious houses in the time of Henry VIII., this structure is called the chapel of St. Alice (another name for this many-named lady!) It fell down in the latter end of the 17th century.

is celebrated every year on the first day of August." He then proceeds to record the miracles of the saint, and the faith and religious frenzy of her votaries; upon which his annotator is a little waggish, and hints that they might now and then have taken *a cup too much*.

The particulars of Almedha's martyrdom are not upon record; but it is probable, like her sister Tydvil, and her brother Cynog, that she met her death at the hands of some of the pagan Saxons, who, in their freebooting incursions, always visited the early British christians with their utmost hatred. Possibly those brutal people marked those religious with their especial animosity only in the spirit of robbers, conceiving that there was more treasure among them than elsewhere, from the liberality of credulous devotees, who visited their cells and hermitages.\*

\* As Almedha is the first of the Welsh martyrs that comes under notice, we shall make a few remarks on Welsh saints generally, as contradistinguished from those of the Roman Catholic church. In William Salsbury's letter respecting the imputed devastation committed on certain Welsh manuscripts, he incidentally strikes an oblique blow at our pretensions to Welsh saints, alleging them to have been uncanonized; meaning that they were nominated saints only for their piety and devotion to the sacred cause of religion by the suffrage of their own clergy and countrymen alone. Thus inferring, that as they had not paid the *sanctification fees*, and received the warrant of saintship from his holiness the Pope, they were, therefore, *uncanonized saints*. The ancient British christians, however, held Papist sanctification at a very low estimate. Previous to the intrusion of Augustine the monk, in his vain attempt at christianizing those who were already better christians than himself, it was the custom of the pious Britons to make their pilgrimages to Jerusalem instead of Rome. It was also their honest boast that their dignified clergy received their appointments at the hands of the highest authorities in the holy city of the apostles, truly sanctified as it had been, by the presence and ministry of the Saviour of the world.

## ANGLESEA BEAUTIES.

LEWIS MORRIS, the Welsh poet and antiquary, has immortalized the female beauty, so abundantly prevailing in Merionethshire, by his popular song of "Morwynion glan Merioneth;" but it appears that the famed island of Anglesea is no less proverbial for that description of excellence. In olden time the little island was renowned for the Egyptian plenty of its corn harvests, in seasons when comparative famine prevailed in other counties of Wales. But in modern times a brief record of its riches may be comprised in the following Triban :—

" In Mona's isle three glories reign,  
Abounding fields of wheaten grain ;  
Rare treasures of the mht'ral world,  
And woman's charms by worth impearl'd."

The late Edward Pugh, author of that delightful work "Cambria Depicta," travelled the island fully imbued with the right feeling to enjoy the presence of these *fairies* as they were presented to him ; and the beautifully embellished book of his production is the noblest monument that could be raised to perpetuate the memory of the gifted artist, poet, philanthropist, and antiquary. In the following notice of a cottage beauty, it will be perceived that he was one of those intense worshippers at the shrine, who sought and found the alliance of the mental with the exterior charms ; and he had also the advantage here of finding a scenic paradise to enshrine his living statue.

"After an early and excellent breakfast, I pushed on across a desert sandy country of two miles, through the whole of which I could not discover one object worthy of observation, till I gained the hill of Lanverian. My attention was now taken up by a scene I had been deprived of for several days, but which was highly improved from this site. I think this the most beautiful eminence in Anglesea. It commands a prospect of nearly the whole of the island ; the promontory of Holyhead is seen westward ; on the north and north-east are the Parys and Bodavon

mountains, and the great stretch of sea, from the head to the extremity of the great horn of Carnarvonshire, with the triad conic mountain called Reilf, with Snowdon and his companions terminating beyond Pen-maen-mawr. William Jones, who occupies the cottage on this spot, enjoys the best summer situation in all Anglesea. I was not a little pleased with his good-looking daughter, who seemed to take the greatest pleasure in pointing out to me these fine objects; and, though familiarized to all the varieties that surrounded her, she spoke of them with a warmth of soul, and strength of judgment, that would have done honour to some in much more exalted situations."

Our artist's fascination had nearly cost him dear, and led him to an adventure, which, but for the difference of a sandy instead of a rocky coast, somewhat resembles the perilous scene described in Sir Walter Scott's "Antiquary." Hence let all "adorers," whether poets or painters, beware of indulging their propensities by the sea-side during the season of an insidious advancing flood-tide. He says—

"I now descended this hill with some degree of haste, in order to gain Malldraeth sands before the tide could prevent my crossing them, but should have effected this with much less trouble, had not the artless manner and unaffected address of the young woman just mentioned, kept me longer on the spot than it was prudent to stay. The tide was making rapid advances, and a race with it was necessary before I could gain a safe place to pass over."

After minutely describing the architectural and scenic charms of Plas-coch (red mansion) and Plas-newydd (new mansion), on leaving the latter, he came in contact with a delightful object that drew forth his warmest powers of description. He says, "on quitting these grounds, at the north-east lodge, a woman very neatly apparelled opened the gate, the child she held in her arms arrested and engrossed my attention for some time. Of all the children that I have ever seen in my travels over various parts of Great Britain, among the poor, the middle classes, and the rich, my eyes have not yet been blessed with one so lovely. Its form was so angelic, and its face so divine, that for a moment one

might have fancied it had made a transitory visit from the realms above, in order to raise admiration in those below."

"The lovely babe was born with every grace;  
Such was its form, as painters, when they shew  
Their utmost art, on naked loves bestow."

DRYDEN'S OVID.

At Tregarnedd (Tumulus farm), "the handsome residence of Mr. Grindley," Mr. Pugh found himself on classic ground, amidst very interesting historical associations; for, in a mansion of the same name, at a short distance in the rear of Mr. Grindley's house, dwelt of yore the celebrated Sir Griffith Lloyd, knighted by Edward I. for bearing the earliest intelligence of a prince having been born to him in Carnarvon Castle. But more renowned for the spirited but despair-inspired motto which he assumed on his revolt and struggle for recovering the independence of his groaning country—"Gnell marw vel dyn, na byw vel ci."\* The gentle artist found himself very comfortable here; and, notwithstanding the anti-Cambrian name of his host and family, his fair daughter delighted him with truly Cambrian music, though not upon the national instrument. He states, "early in the morning I was most agreeably awakened by the sounds of that feminine instrument the piano-forte, on which Mr. Grindley's amiable daughter was playing the sprightly national air of Sir Harry Ddu, or Black Sir Harry, which she touched with so much certainty, feeling, and unassuming ornament, that it produced a most rapturous effect upon my nerves."

Whoever is acquainted with the Welsh character, will be aware that one of the peculiarities of the people, in every part of the principality, is that of forming all sorts of conjectures about the strangers who happen to pass in their neighbourhood, and even acting on conjectures, incorrect as they mostly are, as if they were founded on indubitable facts. Whimsical instances of these sort of errors are detailed by Pugh. It seems, as a pedestrian artist, he travelled with a light knapsack at his shoulders, an umbrella in his right hand, and a small portfolio, sus-

\* In English, "better die like a man than live like a dog."

pended to his right shoulder by a broad piece of tape, came under his arm. Such an appearance, according to the notions of certain merry maids of Mona, implied that he was hawking different articles of female finery, and essentials of the seamstress or work-table, and a bevy of the island's beauties, full of mirth and mischief, suddenly set upon him.

"I was all at once greeted by three or four pretty white-teethed, rosy-cheeked, black-eyed nymphs, with 'pray, Moses, vat be you got to shell; open your bags, Moses, for we want some bodkins, sheezars, and oder tings.' A plague upon these wicked girls, thought I, they have taken me for a Jew pedlar." He relates a somewhat similar anecdote of another artist travelling in Wales. "I know an artist who, the summer before, in company with a clergyman of Chester, was on his way to Carnarvonshire, when he perceived an old woman running and shouting after him to stop: he did so, and the old dame arriving, nearly out of breath, said, 'for God's sake, Mr. Abraham, I am almost blind; I want a pair of spectacles.'"

It may here be remarked that the peculiar character of the female beauty of North Wales, is the bright brown complexion called *brunette*; the finely chiselled nose and mouth; black or hazel eyes; white, small, and even teeth; and the most polished silken tresses that ever came under the description of *glossy*, coal-black hair. In mercy to the race of man, and as a matter of fair-play to other fair ones, in not permitting the brunettes to monopolize too many charms to themselves, we are bound to state as a drawback on them, that these splendid features are rarely accompanied by a fine high forehead, but often the extreme reverse. In the historical Triads of the ancient Britons, the *Cymru*\* are said to have come, originally, from the Summer Country, over the Hazy Sea, which appellations are generally descriptive of Asia, and the German ocean. It is rather corroborative of this that the complexions and cast of countenance of those North-Walian families, who seem to be of unmixed Celtic blood, appear to be somewhat Asiatic, although, of course, much changed by climate.

\* Pronounced Cumree.

In two instances Warner mentions with admiration these features of the Anglesea females among the humbler classes, accompanied with favourable remarks on their exemplary industry and general good conduct. Of the people working at the mine of the Parys mountain, he says, "they are a remarkably decent and *orderly* race of people—the men healthy and strong; the women tall and robust with fine countenances, sparkling black eyes, and teeth like ivory." Of an Anglesea pair, who managed one of the ferry-boats between them, he observes—"anxious to reach Barmouth this evening, we quitted Pen-morva early in the morning, crossing the mouth of the Traeth-mawr and the Traeth-bach, in a small leaky skiff, with a heavy gale of wind right against us. Across this pass, however, we were safely rowed by the man and his wife who keep the ferry; the former a true Celt in stature and appearance, the latter exhibiting the remains of a beautiful person, with *the eye of lustre and the teeth of ivory almost peculiar to her country*. Unfortunately we could exchange no communication with this harmonious couple, as they scarcely spoke a word of English."

It is said of the female, in the above account, that "she exhibited the *remains* of a beautiful person." The remark brings sadly on our recollection the numerous instances which we have witnessed of the premature decay of female beauty. A few remarks on the causes of this lamentable failure, which generally accompanies a still more deplorable loss, that of health, with their antidotes, will not be unacceptable to our female readers; at least to those whose good sense will enable them to relish rough but honest truths, which we disdain sugaring, to suit the palates of those fastidious and fanciful fools who are the principal objects of our well-meaning censures. To uphold the glories of true womanhood, in contradistinction to that trashy mass of foolery and affectation called *fine-ladyism*, is our grand point of moral to the different memoirs in this publication.

Wealthy females, of the higher and middle-classes, frequently banish their beauties, very soon after they have become matrons, by undue personal indulgences; especially where rank and fortune would seem to make them irresponsible for their enormities. But honest, equitable Nature, who



is no class-legislatress, laughs to scorn such insolent violators of her righteous laws; and to prove that *all* are amenable to them, brands every offender with the fiery stamp of their crime right in the front, and shoots the poison which they have imbibed through every vein and artery.

Although the evil passions, spleeny chagrin, heart-nursed malignity, and stormy rage, carve deep and unseemly gravings in the human countenance, which becomes a mirror to reflect them, are the greatest destroyers of female beauty; but in the second degree, inordinate indulgence in the luxuries of the table carry the annihilating rod with almost equal certainty. Fair sluggards, who eschew all exercise or exertion—fair gluttons and epicures—and they are no fabulous birds—soon become what is plainly called *fat and fubzy*—and learn to emulate the uncomely rotundity and compass of a haystack; while those who imbibe stronger potations than the tea-table can supply, should feel no surprise if the lily and the rose be ultimately supplanted by those unsightly flowers of intemperance called wine-buds, and grog-blossoms.

When that rough, honest, unmincing surgeon, John Abernethy, once *gave audience* to a lady of high rank, she feigned great surprise on consulting a looking-glass, and discovering a certain crop of scarlet abominations that had recently made their appearance, where more modest flowers had once bloomed. "Bless me, Mr. Abernethy! where could these horrid pimples come from?" was her question; "from the brandy-bottle, madam, from the brandy-bottle," was his prompt reply.

That high crime against the purity of nature's ordinances, so frequently perpetrated by ladies of rank, of transferring their maternal duties to a hireling, declining the sweetest boon and prerogative of the young mother, that of nursing and feeding her own offspring, carries home a punishment, a well merited punishment, to every offender, however the contemptible cant of fashion, and the inane prate of exclusive coteries may aver to the contrary. The object of this insane conduct is, to preserve their fine figures, forsooth! and save their beauties from suffering under the irritation and care entailed on the whole human race, and supposed to assail **on especially** during the process of these sacred duties.

The cruel selfishness which prompts such a dereliction of duty is not only founded in error, but meets its just punishment in that most severe infliction, the alienation of their offspring's affection. Whoever has witnessed the sweet serenity, and heartfelt affection beaming in the countenance of the nursing mother, as she folds her thriving baby to her bosom—her clear-skinned healthiness and purity of look—has beheld one of nature's sweetest objects of heart-touching veneration. Look next at her extreme contrast, the opulent member of the exclusive classes, the heartless dame who places her offspring out to nurse! This imaginary *beauty preserver*, by such an arrangement, is in fact the active destroyer of that very treasure which she elaborately attempts to enshrine—at the heavy expense of health, duty, morality, and even her religion. The peevishness and chagrin engendered by disappointment are the most certain destroyers of female charms.

But the middle and humbler classes have also their mutilators of beauty, which, with an antidote to the evil, is well described in the following passage:—

"A woman's beauty depends so much upon expression that if *that* be spoilt, farewell to all her charms; and which nothing tends more to bring about than a countenance *soured with imaginary cares*, instead of being lighted up with thankfulness for innumerable blessings. That is what makes half the women wither into wrinkles so early in life; whilst nothing renders their beauty so lasting as that placid look of pure benevolence which emanates from a heart full of thankfulness to God, affection for those nearest and dearest to them, and good will towards all mankind. \* \* \* A woman may be of great assistance to her husband in business, by wearing a cheerful smile continually upon her countenance. A man's perplexities and gloominess increase a hundredfold when his better-half moves about with a continual scowl upon her brow. A pleasant, cheerful wife is a rainbow set in the sky, when her husband's mind is tossed with storms and tempests; but a dissatisfied and fretful wife, in the time of trouble, is like one of those fiends who delight to torture lost spirits."\*

\* I am sorry not to know the name of the author of this well-written and beautiful passage, having extracted it from an album.

## ANGHARAD,

DAUGHTER OF GWGAN AB MEYRIC AB DYVENWAL, AB ARTHEN,  
AB SEISYLLT, KING OF CARDIGAN, AND QUEEN OF RODERIC  
THE GREAT, KING OF ALL WALES AND THE ISLE OF MAN.

"Angharad,\* the fair queen of Roderic the great."

As there is no positively personal history to be related of this princess, we should not have felt justified in introducing her into this work, were it not that she became a partner, by wedlock, in certain momentous events, originating in her time, and possibly influenced by her in her maternal character.

On the death of Mervyn Vrych, A.D. 843, his son Roderic succeeded to his dignity, as sovereign prince of North Wales, Powys, and the Isle of Man. Soon afterwards he espoused Angharad, daughter of Meyric ab Dyvenwal, by which marriage he united all South Wales to his other dominions, and became the sole sovereign of the whole, as one principality.

It appears unaccountable how Roderic acquired the distinction of "*mawr*," or the *great*, as none of his deeds are of such pre-eminent import as to entitle him to such a superlative mark of national approbation. Casting a retrospective glance through the long and dark vista of ages, into the modes and measures of his remote reign, we find them abounding with such glaring error, and fatal impolicy, that he could in no manner merit the distinctive appellation bestowed on him by his flattering subjects—unless, indeed, in a sense too ridiculous for the dignity of history, as, among the rulers of the nations, he may be classed with the greatest of great blunderers.

After treating of the fine position in which fortune had placed him, as *Brenhin Cymru oll*, or sovereign of all Wales, Warrington remarks—"the firmness resulting from this union, the nature of the country, and valour of the inhabitants, their inveteracy against the Saxons, and the perilous situation of that people, were important advantages which opened with the reign of Roderic. If this fortunate combination of circumstances had been directed agreeably to a

\* The English of Angharad, is Harriet, said to be derived from Harriette or little Harry.

wise policy, it would probably have secured the independency of Wales, and have fixed its government upon a basis so solid and permanent, that it might have sustained the storms of ages, and have fallen at length amid the ruins of time, unless undermined by the refinements and luxury of a bordering and more civilized and powerful people.

Instead of taking advantage of this fortunate conjuncture, a crisis which will never more return in the annals of Wales, a fatal and irreparable measure took place. For Roderic, early in his reign, *divided his dominions into three principalities* (North Wales, South Wales, and Powys), which, during his life, were governed by chieftains acting under his authority; and this singular event seems to have arisen from the narrow idea, that the Welsh, accustomed to be ruled by their native princes, ought not to yield obedience to a common sovereign."

It will be noticed, that on the death of Roderic, his three sons were placed to supersede the governors originally appointed by their father, and each became the future sovereign of his respective principality. It is possible that Angharad, the subject of our memoir, was not altogether blameless in this preposterous arrangement; considering how much female influence can bias, and generally carry its point, when the object is to favour their offspring; and, we conceive, that nothing short of maternal partiality and woman's weakness, would induce Roderic to make a permanent division of his dominions between his sons.

In the third year of his reign, A.D. 846, Roderic acquired some celebrity by the spirited repulse which he gave Berthred the king of Mercia, supported by Ethulwulph king of England, who had invaded his dominions; but neglecting to take measures against the recurrence of similar invasions, his memory has justly been subjected to the following rebuke from the page of history:—"If Roderic had possessed the qualities of a truly great prince, he would at least, at this fortunate period have attempted to provide against future evils; and the nature of the country, intersected by rivers, and fortified by mountains, and almost surrounded by the ocean, might have pointed out the rational means of defence. Had this prince made a proper

use of the leisure which the troubles of England had given him, he would have placed garrisons in the frontier towns, would have collected magazines, and fortified the passes, and would have exerted his utmost ability to secure his country from foreign invaders, by forming a naval power. He would also have endeavoured to reduce his subjects to a just subordination, by promoting among them a spirit of union, and a steady obedience to the laws. Instead of these regulations, that period seems to have been distinguished by a total neglect of every measure, which if steadily pursued, might have given security to his kingdom."\*

In 872, twenty-nine years after Roderic's accession to sovereignty, Alfred ascended the throne of England. After ages have unanimously acknowledged the great capacity and genius for government which distinguished this prince, and with the evidence of his undying claims to their suffrages before them, have readily ratified the title of "great," so deservedly bestowed on him by his grateful contemporaries and subjects. Were Roderic Alfred's junior, instead of being considerably his senior, his assumption of a similar distinction might be open to suspicion, that his countrymen had awarded it, in imitation of that so justly bestowed upon his English contemporary without troubling themselves in discriminating the difference between their respective claims. Thus giving an instance of affection overbearing wisdom, and of loyalty surpassing the calm dictates of justice; a national rivalry between the subjects of two sovereigns, in evincing their devotion to the memory of their deceased kings. But as the fact is contrary, and Alfred young enough to have been Roderick's junior son, no such inference can be made; and the mist of incertitude must still envelop what no rational conjecture can effectually dissipate.

Strangely enough, the Saxon Alfred did more, in some respects, for the glorification of Cambrian fame, than ever was performed by their own vaunted "Rodri mawr," whose memory is associated with the source of all their direct

\* Warrington.

Among the minor blunders of Roderic he changed the royal residence from Caer Segont, near the present town of Carnarvon, to Aberffraw in the island of Anglesea. Warrington remarks, "It is strange that he should desert a country where every mountain was a natural fortress; and in times of such difficulty and danger should make choice of a residence so exposed and defenceless."

afflictions and national calamities for ages after his decease. Our history records of the former—"engaged through his reign in affairs of war or legislation, or in introducing into his kingdom learning and the arts, this prince filled every department in the state, and those appertaining to science, with men of the greatest abilities. Having founded the university of Oxford, he invited out of Wales two persons distinguished for their learning, John De Erigena, surnamed Scotus, and Asser, surnamed Menevensis, who had been educated at the college of St. David, the former of whom he appointed a professor to the university he had lately established. And taught by experience the impolicy of contending with the Danes by land, and the necessity of establishing such a navy as might enable them to oppose them at sea, he engaged in his service many Welshmen acquainted with the art of ship-building, whom he appointed superintendants of the dockyards, and afterwards employed in honourable stations in the fleet."

In the year 877 Angharad became a widow, Roderic having fought with his usual gallantry of spirit against the English, who invaded the island of Anglesea, at length fell in defence of his country, being, with his brother Gwyriad, slain in battle. This engagement was called by the Welsh *Gwaith dydd sul y Mon*; the Sunday's work of Mona, from the battle having been fought on the sabbath.

At this period Angharad was the widowed mother of eight children, three of whom, Anarawd, Cadell, and Mervyn, were respectively appointed by the will of their father to be the sovereigns of North Wales, Powys, and South Wales. "These princes were called *y Tri Twysoc Talaethiuc*, or the three crowned princes, by reason that each of them wore upon his helmet a cornet of gold, being a broad headband, indented upwards, and wrought with precious stones, which in Welsh is called *Talaeth*."\* The names of the other children were Roderic, Meyric, Edwal, Gwyriad, and Gathelic. It is probable these children, for their protection, were divided among the three sovereign brothers, who might employ them in honourable posts under their respective governments.

\* Wynn's History of Wales.

The date or particulars of Angharad's death are not upon record. As Cadell, although the second son of Roderic and Angharad, had South Wales, the best portion of the father's dominions assigned him, it is probable that he was his mother's favourite, and that she spent the rest of her life under his protection. A writer of the age of James I., finds a different motive for this peculiar assignment of South Wales to Cadell, in preference to his elder brother Anarawd.

"It may perhaps be marvelled at why Rodericke the great, in the division above-mentioned, gave to his younger sonne the greatest and most fruitfull part of this whole country. To which we can answer that South Wales indeed, was the greater and richer, but yet accompted the worser part, because the nobles there refused to obey their prince; and allsoe for that the sea-coasts were grievously infested with Flemings, English, and Normans, inasmuch that the prince was enforced to remove his seat of sovereignty from Camarthen to Denevor Castle."\*

The fatal measure of Roderic in dividing his dominions between his three sons, caused his example to become a precedent, not only for them, but their posterity to all future time, to subdivide their possessions, according to the number of their children, grandchildren, &c., till from princes they dwindled into lords and lordlings, and in a few generations to small land-proprietors or farmers. This was called the law of gavel-kind, and had Wales been a republic, such a custom would have wrought gloriously for the benefit of the state, by reducing those mischievous bloodshedding would-be potentates, into the more innocent and useful characters of tillers of the soil. But to the disastrous workings of that evil system in monarchy—or numberless monarchies—at variance with each other, and to the occasional disregard of the law of primogeniture, which led to usurpations and filled the land with pretenders to sovereignty, Britain first, and ultimately Wales, owed their subjection and ruin. But the discussion of these matters is the peculiar province of our national history, to which, for further and better illustration, we now refer our readers.

\* In Welsh *Dinas-vaur*, signifying the great fortress.

## ANGHARAD,

SOLE DAUGHTER AND HEIRESS OF MEREDITH AB OWEN, KING  
OF SOUTH WALES AND POWYS, AND QUEEN OF LLEWELYN  
AB SEISYLLT, KING OF ALL WALES.

By the right proceeding from his marriage with this princess, Llewelyn ab Seisyllt succeeded his father in law, Meredith ab Owen, at his death, in the year 998, in the sovereignty of South Wales and Powys. In the year 1015 having defeated Æthan ab Blegored the usurper of the crown of North Wales, and slain him and his four sons in battle, he united, once more, the three principalities, and became the sovereign of all Wales.

"This prince, maternally descended from the royal blood of Wales, had some colourable pretence for his ambition, his mother Trawst being the daughter of Elis, the second son of Anarawd, who was the eldest son of Roderic the great." \*

Although Llewelyn was a brave and most successful warrior, yet, by wisely coinciding in the salutary and amiable suggestions of his wife the princess Angharad, who intensely and most actively studied and forwarded the happiness of their subjects in numerous instances of reform, he acquired his brightest laurels by his prolongation of the days of peace—ever eschewing war, till the necessity for crushing rebellion compelled him to have recourse to vigorous and decisive measures.

Although the interference of females in politics and public business has been frequently censured, as productive of much mischief to a state; yet, it is not always that that the world has been just enough to yield to woman her due share of fame where her influence has been every thing in increasing national glory, by forwarding the good of mankind step-by-step from the lowest of the domestic altar. The evil of female as well as male sway, is traceable only to the

\* Warrington.



exertions, his payment in coin or kind was certain. That such conferences did take place in reality, is most certain, for the result, however ungarnished by details, is upon record, in that sunny page which informs us of the glories of Llewelyn ab Seisyllt's reign. "*The earth brought forth double—the people prospered in all their affairs, and multiplied wonderfully;—there was not a poor man in all Wales, from the southern to the northern sea;—every man had plenty, every house a dweller—and every town inhabitants.*" Alas, that days so truly glorious, should be so limited in duration!

For seventeen years after their accession to sovereignty, the civilizing efforts of this amiable prince and princess were limited to their dominions of South Wales and Powys. But in the year 1015, as before related, Llewelyn ab Seisyllt defeated and slew in battle an ambitious adventurer, who had usurped the throne of North Wales, named Æthan ab Blegored, with his four sons; he then added that principality to his former possessions, and thus became sovereign of all Wales. This circumstance, which would appear to have been the most auspicious of his life, and the most fortunate for the welfare of the country, ultimately proved the most fatal. On the conquest of North Wales, Llewelyn and his princess determined to make it their principal residence, as it was always considered superior or first in the order of precedence of the three principalities. With this view they commenced the erection of the castle of Rhyddlan, and spent many of their pacific and happy days in superintending its erection; and at the same time they both pursued the natural bent of their genius in favouring the arts of peace in their new dominions as they had formerly done in the old. This dwelling becoming a favourite residence, they consumed more of their days in it than accorded with their usual wisdom and policy, the satisfaction of their earlier subjects, or the usage of the Cambrian princes. This was an especial error, indeed a fatal innovation in a country like Wales, where the people of every district were accustomed at stated periods to see the person of their sovereign. Perhaps such residence and *progresses through the land* were indispensable to the safety

of the sovereign, as they served to keep alive the flame of loyalty among such fluctuating and variable dispositions as he had to deal with, where credulity in believing the insinuations and professions of a traitorous aspiring demagogue was one of the unfortunate characteristics of this people, and the frequent source of their national calamities. In general the prince had a Llys or palace in every Cantrev, or hundred, where he could command the services of certain tenants, to act, for the time of their stay, as domestic servants. It might be conceived, perhaps, that the burdensome expense of quartering their prince upon the people, in the different districts, would be grudgingly assented to, and render the custom "more honoured in the breach than the observance," and the omission of their visits more desirable than their payment. But such churlish feelings and harsh mode of thinking were very foreign to the Welsh, who generally might be said to idolize their prince, and literally rejoiced in his presence; while, on the contrary, they resented and punished his absence, by their disobedience and rebellion, as the discontent and insurrections we are about to record aptly illustrate.

Endeared, as we may conceive such sovereigns as Llewelyn and Angharad to have been, to the better disposed portion of the people, an absence of four years from their earlier subjects seems to have alienated their affections, and smouldering discontent for their apparent preference to the northern principality, at length burst into a flame of indignation among the southern, and completely annihilated every feeling of deference and loyalty.

"The first appearance of disaffection broke out (A.D. 1019) in the rebellion of Meyric, a chieftain of eminence, but was easily checked by Llewelyn, who slew the traitor with his own hand, and defeated his forces. So alienated from their loyalty were the people of South Wales, that they engaged a Scotsman of mean birth to be the instrument of their design, imposing him upon the world as the son of their late prince Meredith,\* and by the name of Rheen† the disaffected chieftains proclaimed this impostor their sovereign."

\* In Welsh written *Meredydd*.

† In Welsh written *Rhan*.

"Llewelyn ab Seisyllt having intelligence of the rebellion, collected his forces, and marched into South Wales to give an early check to the evil at its source, and having advanced to Abergwille,\* near the town of Carmarthen, he found the whole power of the country waiting his approach, under the command of the newly created prince. At the moment when the two armies were going to engage, Rheen encouraged his soldiers by a confident assurance of victory, after which he privately withdrew out of the battle. Llewelyn boldly confronting the danger, and placing himself at the head of his troops, led them on to the charge, calling aloud upon the impostor, whose cowardice so little justified the character he had assumed. This battle was bloody, and on each side disputed with great spirit; for, strange as it may appear, the rebels fought with determined bravery for a despicable coward, though an idol of their own raising, while the royalists were scarcely animated in the cause of their sovereign, a native of their own country, and of such incomparable merit. At length the troops of Llewelyn, fired with the extraordinary valour of their prince, and ashamed to be defeated by men over whom they had been often victorious, made a vigorous effort, which put the enemy to flight, and the impostor, notwithstanding the stratagem he had made use of to save his life, was overtaken and slain in the pursuit."†

Having thus fortunately put an end to the rebellion, Llewelyn ab Seisyllt once more returned a conqueror to his anxious and affectionate princess. But their happiness was not destined to be of long continuance. The next year Angharad had to lament the violent and bloody death of this heroic and excellent prince, by the vile hands of assassins. Warrington thus relates the melancholy catastrophe :—

"The small remainder of his days this prince passed in tranquillity; but his great and virtuous qualities could not exempt him from the destiny which usually attended the princes of Wales. For Howel and Meredith, the sons of Edwyn,‡

\* In Welsh written Abergwill, each of the names being pronounced as spell in the text.

† Warrington and the Welsh Chronicles.

‡ *Ab Einon, ab Owen, at Howel Dda.*

whose family for some years had been set aside in the succession to the throne of South Wales, engaged in a conspiracy against him, and either by their emissaries, or with their own hands, assassinated this brave and amiable prince," in the year 1021. He left one son, Griffith, who in after time succeeded to his father's throne.

Some years after the death of Llewelyn ab Seisyllt, Angharad contracted marriage again, with a chieftain named Cunvyn Heerdreue; \* by whom she had several children. The different claims preferred by those pretenders, in after times, by their violent attempts to seize the sceptre of sovereignty, caused great confusion and civil commotions in the land. Thus her latter union became as disastrous as the former had been brilliant and auspicious, in a country where she had effected so much towards bettering the condition of the people, and disseminating universal happiness.† The period or particulars of her death are unknown; but the share she took in the government of one of the best of the Welsh princes, has greatly endeared her memory to after ages.

\* In Welsh written Cynvin Hirdreue.

† In the days of Welsh independence, it was a frequent manœuvre of an aspirant to sovereignty to contract marriage with the widow or near relative of a deceased legitimate prince; which union seems to have been respected by the people, and gave the usurper some colour of pretension for his assumption of the royal dignity. But, as in this case of Angharad's second union, it led to dire evil consequences in aftertime. Regular hereditary descent being thus interrupted; it gave birth to that most monstrous of national calamities, a disputed succession.

## ANGHARAD,

QUEEN OF THE FUGITIVE PRINCE HOWEL AB EDWYN, RIGHT-  
FUL SOVEREIGN OF SOUTH WALES.

THIS princess owes her celebrity to her beauty and her misfortunes;—often the cause and effect of the falls and follies of woman, but not so in the present instance. Angharad was as virtuous as she was beautiful, and her misfortunes entirely unmerited, but traceable only to the exceeding folly, presumption, and we may add criminality of her husband.

Angharad became the wife of the fugitive prince Howel ab Edwyn ab Eineon ab Howel Dda, or Howel the Good, the celebrated Welsh legislator. But great parts are not always hereditary; the husband of Angharad, though brave to excess, possessed no portion of the wisdom of his ancestor; his bravery was nullified by his rashness; his claim to a crown, set aside by the popular dread of his indiscretion, and his entire life evinced a headlong, impatient, ill-considered course of conduct, that led to numerous discomfitures, and ultimately produced his own untimely death, and the long-sorrowing captivity and ruin of his blameless wife.

Splendid as was the reputation of Howel's grandfather, the famed Howel the Good, his fame availed little to aid the cause of his hot-headed descendant; Howel ab Edwyn had for his opponent a prince equally wise, brave, and popular as his progenitor; the gallant capable Llewelyn ab Seisyllt. During the unsolvable intricacy of an agitated question of right, entangled by a train of usurpations and irregular successions, this prince, as before related, was, in the year 1015, by the suffrage of the people, the best and truest of titles, combined with his victories over other pretenders, raised to the sovereignty of all Wales. As the merits of Llewelyn ab Seisyllt have been discussed in the preceding article, the memoirs of his wife Angharad, a repetition is *unnecessary*. To recover his long-opposed right to the



throne of South Wales, Howel ab Edwyn, assisted by his brother Meredith, engaged in various plots and stratagems to dispossess Llewelyn ab Seisyllt of that portion of his dominions : failing to dethrone him by the force of arms, these dishonourable brothers, restless and tenacious in their aims through all failures, at length descended to the baseness of entertaining a plan of assassination. In the year 1021, just as that wise and gallant prince had returned home to North Wales, triumphant over certain rebels, these unscrupulous and dark-minded sons of Edwyn, either by their own hands or the agency of others, murdered him. Their villany, however, proved utterly unavailing in forwarding their ambitious views. The odium naturally excited by the assassination of a prince, so greatly and very generally beloved as Llewelyn ab Seisyllt, precluded the murderers from attaining the ends they sought. Although Howell and Meredith, favoured by the lawlessness of the times, for the present escaped the punishment due to their crimes, they had the mortification to see the throne they had made vacant occupied by another pretender, who defeated their forces and kept his seat. So absolutely crushed were their powers at this time, the year 1021, that for ten years they remained in a state of exile and retirement. During this period we entirely lose sight of the unhappy lady of this memoir, without a trace of either her place of refuge or mode of existence. But we may conceive that her state was wretched indeed, without a home, or even a prospect of the settlement of her affairs, so as to rest once more beneath the safety of a secure roof. Although the mate of an aspirant to a throne, she must have found her condition, in those murderous times, far less felicitous than the humblest cottage wife, whose lowly lot became her security from molestation.

In the year 1031 Howell and Meredith once more brought an army into the field, principally composed of Irish and Scotch mercenaries, with the view of driving Rhytherch ab Iestyn from the throne of South Wales. Fortune at length seemed to smile on their efforts, for they conquered his forces and slew the *usurper*. Scarcely had they attained the *object of a life of contention* and vicissitudes, when the

fate more deplorable, his wife, the unhappy Angharad, was taken prisoner, and fell into the hands of his rival in power, the man whose father he had himself murdered. The beauty of Angharad captivated the heart of her conqueror, and Griffith, with all his merits, had no pretensions to the character of a Scipio. "Instead of protecting her honour, or yielding up this princess to her husband, she was detained by Griffith as his concubine." "In times less savage than these, such an action, measured by civilized ideas of heroism, incapable of offering violence to weakness, or of insulting the feelings of a vanquished enemy, would have been received with general abhorrence. But it does not appear that Griffith lost any reputation with his subjects—the Welsh regarding whatever they had taken in war, even the wives of the vanquished, as the lawful property of the conqueror."

The above passage is the remark of Lord Lyttleton on this event. Setting aside the preposterous absurdity of "measuring an action," perpetrated in times comparatively savage by civilized ideas of heroism, greatly as the conduct of Griffith is to be reprobated, his lordship might have remembered that the Welsh are by no means singular in such instances of barbarity, as parallel cases of equal atrocity may be cited done by English heroes, "of the gentle Norman blood," as Sir Walter Scott delights to designate it, in contradistinction to the Saxon and Celt. The pitiable helplessness of the young princess Nest, daughter of the sovereign prince Rhys ab Tewdwr, on the death of her father in battle, the flight of her brothers for their lives, from those who were thirsting for their blood, the utter destruction of her paternal home, and her consequent orphancy and destitution, proved no arguments of protection against the lustful barbarity of the Anglo-Norman king, Henry I., who made the descendant of a long line of princes his concubine. And this took place more than a century later than the instance here cited; and, among others, we might enlarge on a still more modern piece of barbaric atrocity, perpetrated by the infamous King John, in the hanging of the boy-hostages, the sons and representatives of both royal and noble families of Wales, entrusted to his custody and care by their confiding *parents*.

In the year 1040, we find Howel again in the field at the head of an army;—"stung with the keen resentment which such injuries would naturally excite, Howel came the third time into South Wales, in hopes of revenging the late insult upon his honour, and, by another brave effort, to recover his wife and his crown. He had not been there long before a large body of foreigners landed in the country, who, spreading themselves abroad, committed great depredations. Howel, though desirous of reserving his strength for the main contest with the prince of North Wales, could not be indifferent to their ravages; but with much gallantry of spirit, and with an honest desire of conciliating the affections of his former subjects, he suddenly attacked the foreigners, and forced them with great loss to retire to their ships." Highly creditable both to his bravery and his patriotism, as was this event, towards the main object of his enterprise Howel seems to have done nothing this year, although his great enemy was opposed by another foe, and even taken prisoner by Cunnan ab Iago. But Griffith was soon rescued by his truly loving subjects of North Wales.

In the two next years we find Howel ab Edwyn again at the head of warlike forces, indefatigable in the aim that he seems to have considered the only business of his life, the recovery of his wife and dominions; but, alas! for the sanguine hopes of mortals! those golden dreams of felicity for which he so often pined and nearly maddened in solitude, and fought and bled in the field, were never on earth to be realized.

In the year 1042 the two hostile armies, commanded respectively by the princes Howel ab Edwyn and Griffith ab Llewelyn, met in the mountains of South Wales, near the source of the river Towey, Carmarthenshire. Although strongly supported by certain Danish auxiliaries, and the friends, with their forces, who still adhered to his fortunes, the unfortunate Howel was completely defeated, the greater part of his army cut to pieces, and himself slain. Thus was the full measure of vengeance poured upon the head of this prince and family for the murder they had lately committed on the great and good prince Llewelyn ab Seisyllt.



This was heavy news for the unhappy Angharad ; all hope of relief was now lost for ever ; and her captivity became perpetual, under the most degrading, added to the most lamentable of circumstances. It is probable, although the times were fierce and pitiless, that a mind so gentle could find no comfort in the fierce passion of revenge ; or the degradation which befel Nest, Llewelyn's daughter, in the affair with Fleance the son of Banquo, might have proved to her that she was not alone in sorrow, but there was one beneath the same roof with her, a heavy sufferer. The particulars of Angharad's after-life, and the period of her death are alike unknown.\*

\* The disastrous life and unhappy death of the fugitive prince Howel ab Edwyn naturally suggest striking reflections on the ill-defined nature of the national government of the Welsh princes generally ; and are highly illustrative of those anarchical disorders inherent in their imperfect system of succession. Some writers assert that the royal dignity became legally elective in Wales—while others hold the opinion that it was strictly hereditary, till extraordinary circumstances made it necessary, in the exigencies of the hour, to *suspend* the primogenial law of the land. Those *extraordinary* circumstances, were in fact the vices of the system, and became at length of ordinary and common occurrence. The vicious restlessness and turbulence of the semi-barbarous people, impelled them ever to seek a new chief, capable of present governing, on the decease of their sovereign : nor would they tolerate the long minority of a juvenile heir to the crown, although he might be the descendant of the best of their princes. The most patriotic chieftains or nobles of the country frequently coincided in the popular opinion that the bravest warrior and most consummate politician of the day should be elevated to the throne, but never stipulated whether he should possess it only during the non-age of the heir, or in perpetuity. Thus the problem of future government was left to the working of blind chance—the state impregnated with the seed of future wars, and the guardian knot of perplexity subjected to the edge of the keenest sword. Notwithstanding the violence inflicted on the law of primogeniture, by suppressing the hereditary claims of Howel ab Edwyn, doubtless it was beneficial to the nation, that it was successively governed by such superior, though usurping princes as Llewelyn ab Selysili, and his son, of Griffith ab Llewelyn. But other cases might be cited where the election of a new prince, conquests of civil war, and other disturbances of regular succession, caused more evil than good, and tended more to licentious lawlessness and bloodshedding contention than either stability in government, or the happiness of the human race.

## ANGHARAD,

DAUGHTER OF OWEN AB EDWYN LORD OF ENGLEFIELD, AND  
QUEEN OF GRIFFITH AB CUNNAN, KING OF NORTH WALES.

"Angharad, ab Cunnan's \* wise Queen of the North."

As the Welsh princes were no strangers to the policy of forming alliances by marriage with the heiresses, to principalities, or the daughters of powerful princes whose forces could aid them in all emergencies for defence or invasion, it is curious to observe a departure from this interested, but almost essential custom, in so prudent a prince as Griffith ab Cunnan. Instead of seeking a wife among the daughters of the reigning princes of his time, much as he needed such an alliance, he seems to have been enslaved by the surpassing charms of Angharad, daughter of Owen ab Edwyn 'ab Gorono,† a subject, lord of Englefield whom he wooed, won, and wedded, when he might have had ladies of regal parentage (as the homely saying goes) "for the asking."

Although of the legitimate line of princes, Griffith ab Cunnan had been excluded from the succession to the throne of North Wales in consequence of his youth in the first instance, and afterwards from the well supported usurpations of different warlike adventurers. But the result of the decisive battle of Carno, in which, by the aid of his Irish auxiliaries, and prince Rhys ab Tewdwr of South

\* In Welsh. written Cynan, and pronounced as above.

† Owen ab Edwyn was by descent one of the numerous princes of Powys, or central Wales, who by the disastrous law of gavelkind had their original sovereignties so divided, that in the course of a few generations their "dominions" dwindled into estates, and at length into mere farms. Happy had it been for themselves and the country, if contentment accompanied their reduction of rank; but so far was that from being the case, that they were ever engaged in some turbulent undertaking for seizing the possessions of others, and holding them by force of arms, till subdued and expelled by superior powers.

Wales, he slew Trahaern ab Caradoc and defeated his forces, seated him securely on the throne of his ancestors.

Griffith ab Cunnan was born in 1047, consequently on his accession to the crown of North Wales, in 1079, he was thirty-two years of age, about which time he may be supposed to have married Angharad, who must then have been under the age of twenty. A deplorable misfortune which happened to her husband, soon after their union, made Angharad early acquainted with grief, and drugged her cup of happiness with exceeding bitterness.

"A native of Wales, called Meiron Goch (Red Meirion), entered into a conspiracy to betray him into the hands of the English. Agreeably to the plan which had been previously concerted with the earls of Shrewsbury and Chester, a strong body of infantry and horse were stationed at Rug\* in Edeyrnion. The snare being laid, Griffith ab Cunnan was desired by his treacherous subject, at the instance of the two English lords, to give them the meeting, under the colour of a friendly conference. With a simple confidence, which neither agreed with the character of the times nor with the dictates of prudence, the Welsh king came to the place appointed, attended only by a few retainers, whom he had brought out of Ireland. He had no sooner made his appearance, than he was seized, and carried in chains to the castle of Chester. His Irish attendants were allowed to depart, without receiving any other injury than the loss of a thumb, which was cut off from the right hand of each. This instance of whimsical barbarity might arise from the instigation of Meirion Goch, who from the prejudices of his country, would detest them as foreigners, and who might also resent the partiality which this prince had always entertained for the Irish."†

The captivity of Griffith ab Cunnan was extended to a period of twelve years; and was, doubtless, intended to have been continued till released by the friendly hand of

\* Rug is pronounced Reeg.

† Warrington. It appears to us there was more than mere "whimsical barbarity" in this affair. By the deprivation of the thumb of the right hand, these men were for ever disabled from acting as soldiers, as they could neither draw the bowstring nor effectively grasp either a sword, spear, or battle axe.

death. But that dreadful fate was averted by the devoted patriotism of an humble individual, one of Nature's own nobles, whose gallant daring in rescuing his sovereign from his long durance, richly merited a title of nobility in the land of his birth. But in the absence of such an hour, posterity awarded him something better, perpetual fame and ever-verdant laurel in the annals of his nation. As if to compensate a country stigmatised by the production of the traitor Meirion Goch, the same district gave birth to the young hero who now became the deliverer of his prince. But we will give the relation in the words of history. "The situation of this prince excited the compassion of a young man, named Kenric Heer\* (Kenric the tall), a native of Edeyrnion, who determined, if possible, to effect his escape out of prison, though at every hazard to himself. The enterprize was bold, generous, and full of danger. Attended by a few followers, he repaired to Chester, under pretence of purchasing necessities, and having early in the evening gained admittance into the castle, while the keepers were engaged in feasting, he carried on his back the captive prince, loaded with chains, and conveyed him with safety into his own dominions. It is with pleasure we contemplate an action like this, heroic in itself, and directed by a principle of masculine virtue."†

We are not informed what became of Angharad during the twelve years of her husband's captivity. But as North Wales and Powys were overrun and ravaged by the English immediately on the seizure and imprisonment of Griffith ab Cunnan, it is probable she made her escape and found an asylum with her father at Englefield. In the year 1080 she became the mother of a son, who was christened after her father, by the name of Owen. To nurse this boy, who became so famous in after time, as the renowned hero Owen Gwyneth,‡ was the sweetest solace of the young mother, during the long-lasting captivity of her lord and husband. When at length restored to his freedom by the heroic action of Kenric Heer, it was long, very long before

\* In Welsh orthography, Cenric Hir.

† Warrington.

‡ In Welsh written Owain Gwynedd.



she could rejoin him with her royal son. Warrington says: "Though Griffith ab Cunnan had thus fortunately escaped out of the hands of his enemies, he had many difficulties still to encounter—as his own subjects were either dispirited, or alienated from him, and the English were masters of the country. His danger was sometimes so great, that he was obliged to lie concealed in woods, and other places of security. But after he had endured a variety of evils, and taken those castles which the Normans had erected during his captivity, he recovered the entire possession of his kingdom."

Angharad had too much of real, true, generous womanhood in her nature, to wait for the sunny days of prosperity, but determined to hasten to her husband, in spite of all obstacles, to solace him in the dark and stormy season of his adversity, and share all his fortunes whether weal or woe. Beside her affectionate desire to rejoin her lord after so long a separation, she had a powerful reason for taking both a sudden and secret flight from her paternal habitation. What fixed her mind in this resolution was, she had at this time the bitter mortification to suspect, that her father had turned traitor, and was in actual rebellion against his sovereign and son-in-law, and in sworn alliance with the invaders of his dominions. It would be interesting to know all particulars of the manner by which this model of feminine fidelity succeeded in escaping through disturbed districts overrun with the armed invaders and desolaters of her country, with her bold, resolute, but well instructed son, now in the sixteenth year of his age—in what peasant or pilgrim disguises they threaded thus the perils of the way—what forest they crossed, what marsh, and moorland, and sylvan scenes they traversed, on their sure-footed mountain steeds, under the faithful guidance of an attached servant, well qualified in the art of duping all dangerous interrogators who might be disposed to interrupt their journey. It would be pleasant to be enlightened, even by a legend, however doubtful, of the particulars of their progress—what towering castles frowned upon their way, and with ghastly eyelets glared their bloodless faces

into stone, as they noted the threatening arrow points prepared for flight from the death-dealing Norman bows—and what holy brotherhoods gave them welcome to their monasteries and relieved their exhaustion with the much-needed blessings of shelter, bed, and board, after days and nights of exposure to the midnight storm, and all the agitating terrors of being taken prisoners, or perishing with hunger in the stormy wilds. The details of their sufferings, however, remain unchronicled. It is probable that it was towards the latter end of the year 1096, Angharad succeeded in finding her husband, in the midst of warfare, encamped in the island of Anglesea—now, the sole remaining remnant of his dominions, as sovereign of North Wales. And what a meeting of touching tenderness and overwhelming rapture must that have been to each of them. That long-parted pair, who had been sundered almost since their marriage, sixteen years before—the blooming youth, who then for the first time, beheld his heroic father, the subject of his mother's eulogies, and the songs of the patriot bards, since the earliest dawn of his youthful intellect—clasped in that father's arms, who never before had seen his face—in mutual ecstasy of sorrow-mixed endearments.

Although the great object of her perilous pilgrimage was now attained, Angharad soon found the household god Tranquility was not within their palace gates; but that terror, disquietude, and alarm were to be their spectral familiars, their hourly companions in their reduced sovereignty—that their throne was placed on a volcano, whose explosion was daily to be dreaded; and that the threat of the English king to exterminate the inhabitants of North Wales, and to re-people it with his own subjects, appeared to be progressing towards a terrible completion. Again she had to endure a temporary parting with her lord; and at this time with her son Owen. She was left in the best security at the palace of Abervraw, in the island of Anglesea, while they joined the army on the opposite side of the Straights of Menai, to oppose the advance of the English.

"At the secret instigation of the treacherous lord of Englefield, Owen ab Edwyn (the unworthy father of Ang-

harad), and of other chieftains of North Wales, a very formidable army invaded that country, under the command of the earls of Chester and Shrewsbury. Griffith ab Cunnan and his friend Cadwgan ab Bleddyn, not being able on a sudden to collect a force sufficient to oppose them, and already suspecting treason, had no confidence in their troops, therefore, with great foresight and prudence, gave way for a time, and retired into the mountains, for security and observation. The two earls, meeting with no resistance, continued their march into that part of Carnarvonshire which lies opposite Anglesea. Griffith ab Cunnan and his son, in terrible alarm for the safety of Angharad, and the danger which threatened his seat of government, returned to Anglesea, attended by his associate Cadwgan—and having received a slight reinforcement from Ireland, he seemed determined to defend the island. At this critical moment Owen ab Edwyn, Angharad's father, who was in high trust with Griffith, openly avowed his treason, deserted from the banners of his country, the service of his sovereign, and the protection of his own daughter, and with his whole forces joined the English army. Alarmed at the perfidy and revolt of so powerful a chieftain, and unable to oppose the united force of the enemy, Griffith ab Cunnan, with the aid of the faithful Cadwgan, embarked his whole family and friends and set sail for Ireland, where they arrived in safety.

In Ireland they experienced the hospitality of the generous king of Dublin, whose court was always open to the unfortunate refugee princes of Wales. Here they sojourned two years of mournful exile from the disasters of their poor country, whose inhabitants were doomed to the direst fate of houseless destitution, or butchery, at the hands of their victorious invaders.\* During their residence in Ireland Angharad gave birth to a young prince and princess, respectively named Cadwalader and Marret.

\* For a relation of the wanton barbarities exercised by the English on the Welsh, on the conquest of Anglesea, in the year 1096, we refer the reader to the pages of Warrington's history of Wales, 8vo. vol. 1., p. 396. But this historian, with his usual aptitude to find excuses for the enormities of the English, calls this terrible affair, "a full measure of retaliation for the cruelties which they had committed on the English borders," although he is unable to state the particulars of these imputed cruelties.



Unable to endure a longer absence from his country, in the year 1098, Griffith ab Cunnan, accompanied by his princess and family, and attended by Cadwgan ab Bleddyn, returned into Wales, and yielding to the deplorable exigencies of the times, he made peace with the English upon terms of great disadvantage. The death of William Rufus, and accession of king Henry I. ; to the English throne, followed ; while the death of Rhys ab Tewdwr, who fell in battle, and the successful invasion of the Norman knights, deprived South Wales of two of its best provinces—and of its monarchial independence.

The succeeding thirty years from this period, is but the history of English encroachment, Welsh resistance, and ultimate retreat, into the mountainous regions—while their adversaries, advancing into the abandoned plains and vallies, built their monasteries in all the fairest and most fertile districts. But a great day of retribution was at hand, that came at length in all its terrors, to the invaders of the Cambrian soil.

Many years previous to the favourable occurrences about to be related, certain matters of domestic interest took place in the royal family of North Wales—among which may be stated the birth of their son Cadwallon, and four daughters.\* Angharad and her husband had also the happiness to see their eldest son Owen, who had assumed the surname of Gwyneth, married to Gwladys, the daughter of Llywarch ab Trahaern,† lord of Pembroke. Some years later their youngest daughter Gwenllian was married to Griffith ab Rhys, sovereign prince of South Wales, still all was not felicity in their domestic circle ; while yet a very young man their younger son Cadwallon was taken prisoner on the English borders, and immediately put to death. As the dates of these different occurrences are not recorded, it is impossible to trace

\* These were Susanna, Ranull, Nest, and Gwenllan.

† Llywarchern was the son of Trahaern ab Caradoc, who was prince of North Wales, till defeated and killed at the battle of Carno by Griffith ab Cunnan. Nothing could have been more *politic* than this marriage between the son of Griffith and the daughter of Llywarch, considering the power, grievance, and malignity of that ferocious chief, whose murderous exploits are detail'd in the memoirs of Nest, daughter of Rhys ab Tewdwr, and of Gwenllian, wife of Griffith ab Rhys. It was the pacific union of two hostile houses—the son of a dethroned prince united to the daughter of a reigning sovereign.



them at this distance of time, with any thing like certainty, except the marriage of Gwenllian, which must have taken place about the year 1116. Some time previous to this date we find Griffith ab Cunnan deserting the integrity of his character, cajoled by the false courtesies and presents of Henry I., whose court he was induced to visit; he actually attempted the destruction of Griffith ab Rhys, the young prince of South Wales, who afterwards became his son-in-law, although Rhys ab Tewdwr, the father of Griffith, had been mainly instrumental in recovering for him the throne which he then occupied. But as the prince of North Wales afterwards made amends, ratifying by his approval, his daughter's marriage with the son of his ancient friend, history deals leniently with this dark spot in his otherwise unsullied career.

The events of the succeeding twenty years, as far as they affect the personage of this memoir, will find their more appropriate place, according to the arrangements of this work, in the life of the princess Gwenllian, whose marriage is referred to above; therefore, we come at once to the period of immense changes in the political hemisphere of Wales and England.

The year 1135 produced the great blessing to Wales of the death of King Henry I., and the usurpation of the crown of England by King Stephen. A grand retribution was manifest in the wonderful reaction which followed this change of dynasties. The princes and chieftains of Wales, reviving from the paralysis with which overwhelming calamity had stricken them, sprung into new life, like the awakened dead at the sound of the final trumpet. For once they forgot their native animosities, and seemed united in the general virtuous resolution to reconquer their country, and drive the foreign invaders beyond their ancient boundary. Prince Griffith ab Rhys, with his heroic wife Gwenllian, rose up in the south; in Powys every chieftain with inspiring energy was busy in the work of expulsion and restoration; while in the north, Griffith ab Cunnan, assisted by his two gallant sons (Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader), succeeded in regaining every portion of his lost dominions.

During the triumph of the national arms, and the accompaniments of public rejoicing, the royal family of North Wales experienced a private calamity of the most distressing nature, that plunged them all from the height of felicity into the deepest gloom of anguish. This was the death of their youngest daughter Gwenllian, queen of South Wales, in a manner the most violent and unprecedented ever recorded by the pen of history. As the particulars of that tragic catastrophe are related in the memoirs of that princess, it is unnecessary to repeat them here.

It is especially due to the memory of Angharad, to take a review of the characters of her children, formed under her own auspices, and developed under different circumstances in after time. This exemplary prince presents to us the noblest phase of true womanhood, in the perfection of the maternal character which she personally manifested. The brightest effulgence of the hallowed relationship of mother is best exhibited in the conduct of the children she has nurtured, taught, and embellished with the best acquirements her time afforded; and those of Angharad, whose names so pre-eminently stand forth in history, glorify their mother in the merited eulogies which they received: anterior, of course, to the era when the selfish fooleries of fine-ladyism imposed on society the pestilent infliction of the hireling nurse and mercenary governess, for, be it remembered, we are treating of nature's own epoch, when princely matrons did not disdain, personally to nurse, tend, and implant the earliest seed of instruction in the infant mind of their progeny.

After treating in a high strain of eulogy on the heroism displayed by queen Gwenllian, at the time she met her death, Warrington writes thus of the merits of her two brothers who undertook to avenge the death of their sister, whom the brutal English general, Maurice de Londres, had caused to be beheaded.

"Alive to an injury so singular and atrocious, her brothers, Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader, laid waste with infinite fury the province of Cardigan. Among a people whose manners seem to have been little refined by chivalrous feeling, we are surprised at the appearance of characters whose in-

dividual qualities and bravery of spirit, whose courteous and gentle demeanour, might have entitled them to dispute the palm with the most accomplished knights of feudal ages. These distinguished persons were the sons of Griffith ab Cunnan."

Angharad, though many years her husband's junior, had now arrived at that period when life is declining towards its "sere and yellow leaf;" but sorrow more than years produced its usual effect. We are told that besides his legitimate children Griffith ab Cunnan had no less than five others, by "another woman." Although the vicious custom of concubinage was too commonly indulged by the Welsh sovereigns, to be considered by their queens in the light of bitter grievances, or divorcible offences, yet it is not to be supposed that such evil was not without its due weight of infelicity in the conjugal state. But the mind of Angharad appears to have been deeply imbued with the dictates of woman's best philosophy, that sweet enduring patience, and studied prudence, which enabled her to neutralize, and ultimately to triumph over the gall and wormwood of that peculiar infliction, by indulging in the meek reflection, that no fault of her own had given birth to the evil; and that, in the eye of omnipotence, and even that of her own erring lord, she stood exonerated from all personal imputation of faults of temper, or imperious assumption of superior merit.

As she advanced further in years Angharad had to bend beneath a load of accumulated sorrows, which religion alone could alleviate, but nothing remove;—sorrows no less sacred than affecting, from the harsh and untimely removals from this scene of existence of those near and most dear ones, whose infancy she had nursed—little deeming, in their days of youth and innocence, they were destined for a bloody grave. She had successively to bewail the violent deaths of her son Cadwalader, her daughter Gwenllian, and her grandson Morgan; the latter killed with his mother, at the battle of Kidwelly;\* and lastly, for her gallant son in law Griffith ab Rhys, king of South Wales, who died in 1137, having survived his beloved wife but two years. The next year

\* In Welsh written Cidwelll, but pronounced Kidwelley.

brought with it the crowning sorrow of all, the death of her venerable husband Griffith ab Cunnan at the advanced age of eighty-two; after a prolonged reign of fifty years over the principality of North Wales. This prince had eight children by his queen, Angharad; and five by a mistress. The names of the former were, Owen Gwyneth, Cadwalader, and Cadwallon; Marrett, Susanna, Ranulft, Nest, and Gwenllian; and of the latter, Iago, Ascain, and Edwal; Dolhing, and Ellen.\*

Perhaps there can be no fairer criterion by which to judge of a woman's worth, than by the estimation in which she is held by her husband at the latest period previous to his final farewell to herself and the world. By the wording of his will, and the disposal of his worldly possessions, he is enabled to evince the comparative extent of his love, resentment, or indifference; either feeling curbed and corrected, according to the acknowledged measure of her merits, or claims upon his justice or affection. For, however stern, or sensitive to offence, real or supposed, a man may be in his full glow and insolence of health and prosperity, towards the closing scene of life, "a change comes o'er the spirit of his dream," and the humbling process of self-examination, produces the blessed fruit of charity, mercy, and all the better attributes of the christian state. The lesson and terms of forgiveness, too, as taught in the prayer of frequent recurrence, becomes then something more than a heartless utterance of words, and has its due weight in the meditative hour preceeding our latest look on life and its concerns. Examined by this test, Angharad comes off triumphantly. She had assigned to her a larger portion of her dying lord's possessions than could be expected for a queen dowager of those days, when there were so many left, whose helpless condition called for his provident consideration.

Griffith ab Cunnan's death-bed scene is solemnly interesting, from the air of patriarchal simplicity imparted to it by the "ancient monk" by whom it is described.† "His

\* Warrington in his history of Wales has not given the names of this prince's daughters, a remarkable omission in a work professing to be a national history.

† "Griffith ab Cynan, his troublesome life and famous acts are compiled in Welsh," says Sir John Wynne of Gwydir, "by a most ancient friar, or monk of Wales;" "and," continues the historian, "this was found by the posterity of the said Griffith, in the house of Gwydir; and at the request of Maurice Wynne,



sons were among them, and he blessed them, and foretold their fortune, and what peculiar character each should support, as the patriarch Jacob did on taking his dying leave of his sons in Egypt. And he solemnly enjoined them to combat their enemies, with vigour and constancy, after the examples he had set them. Angharad his queen was present, to whom he bequeathed one-half of his personal estate, with two *rhandir* or portions of land, and the customs of Abermenai. His daughters and nephews were also present; and he left to each a legacy, sufficient for their maintenance." The following account of the general regret in foreign states, on the death of Griffith, concluding with a description of his person, in our old monk's usual style, is not without interest.

"The Welsh, the Irish, and the men of Denmark, lamented Griffith, as the Jews mourned for Joshua; he was eighty-two years old, and was buried on the left side of the great altar at Bangor. And let us pray that his soul, &c."

"Griffith in his person was of moderate stature, having yellow hair, a round face, and a fair agreeable complexion; eyes rather large, light eyebrows, a comelie beard, a round neck, white skin, strong limbs, long fingers, straight legs, and handsome feet. He was moreover skilful in divers languages, courteous and civil to his friends, fierce to his foes, and resolute in battle. Of a passionate temper, and fertile imagination."

Angharad outlived her husband many years, but the exact period of her decease is unknown. She is supposed to be buried by his side, near the great altar at Bangor. With whimsical minuteness and brevity her person and merits are thus drawn and summed up by the pen of our old Welsh monk before quoted.

"She was an accomplished person—her hair was long and of a flaxen colour—her eyes large and rolling, and her features brilliant and beautiful. She was tall and well-proportioned—her leg and foot handsome—her fingers long, and her nails thin and transparent. She was good tempered, cheerful, discreet, and witty—gave advice, as well as alms to her needy dependants, and never transgressed the laws of duty."

*Esq.* had the same written in a most ancient book, and was lineally descended from him. Was translated into Latin, by Nicholas Robinson, bishop of Bangor."

## ANGHARAD THE NUN,

DAUGHTER OF THE LADY NEST, AND IVOR HÆL LORD  
OF MAESALEG, MONMOUTHSHIRE, IN THE FOURTEENTH  
CENTURY.

THIS lady was doubtless the *first love* of the poet Davyth ab Gwilym, of whom so much has been written in this work under the heads of Ardidvil, Angharad, Deethgee, and Morvyth of Mona. It has been mentioned in the memoir of Ardidvil, that in consequence of disagreement with his parents he quitted them, and was kindly received at Gwern-y-gleppa, in the lordship of Maesaleg, in Monmouthshire, where he enjoyed the friendship and patronage of Ivor Hæl, a near relative of his father.

"Ivor, deservedly surnamed Hæl, or 'the generous,'\* received his young kinsman with an affectionate kindness, which he even carried so far as to appoint him his steward and the instructor of his only daughter (the lady of our memoir), although Davyth ab Gwilym's qualifications for these duties, were not, it is probable, at that time, of the most obvious character. At least the inconvenient effects of one of these appointments was too soon apparent in the reciprocal attachment that grew up between the poet and his fair charge. The precise nature of Ivor's conduct towards the former, on the discovery of this circumstance, is unknown; but he appears to have treated him with an indulgence which his own regard for the enamoured tutor could alone explain. He is recorded, however, to have been somewhat severe in the treatment of his daughter, whom

\* The Morgans of Tredegar and Itopera, previous to their alliance with the English family of the Goulds, could boast their descent from that splendid chieftain Ivor Hæl. By the English union a double spirit of liberality has poured its beneficence on the land under their influence. The universally acknowledged benevolence and generosity of the late Sir Charles Morgan, his fatherly protection and support of the poor and afflicted, and his patronage of every thing laudable in industrial pursuits, have won the plaudits of an admiring and grateful country that will long venerate and bless his memory, and respect his worthy descendants.

he forthwith conveyed to a convent in the island of Anglesea. Thither she was followed by her devoted swain, who, in the humble capacity of a servant at a neighbouring monastery, consoled himself during his hours of disappointed love, by offering to his mistress the tributes of his muse—all he had then to bestow; and several poems of considerable beauty are still extant, said to have been written during this period. The following forms one of his poetical epistles, in which he instructs a swift winged bird to lure “the nun”\* to the grove :—

True messenger of love—away !  
 And from the Marches bring in May :  
 Thou truant ! thou wert not at hand  
 When most the bard in need did stand  
 Of thy tame wings ! oh ! seek once more  
 The place thou visitedst of yore,  
 Thou of fair form and flight sublime,  
 Visit the damsels white as lime !  
 If in the churchyard thou shouldst meet  
 The gaoler† of the maiden, greet  
 (Thou poet’s treasure, fair and fleet !)  
 Her ears with *psalms* of all the ills  
 With which that maid my bosom fills !  
 Bless’d nuns, fair saints, from ev’ry land,  
 In their bright cells my suit withstand :  
 Those sacred snow-hued virgins, white  
 As gossamer, on mountain height ;  
 Those maids, like swallows to behold  
 Those holy damsels of the choir,  
 Sisters to Morvyth,‡ bright as gold !  
 Oh ! visit her at my desire ;  
 And if thy efforts vain should be,  
 To lure her from the priory,  
 And thou the snow-complexioned maid  
 With songs of praise canst not persuade  
 Her lover in the grove to meet,  
 Then carry her upon thy feet—  
 Delude the nun who, in yon shrine  
 Rings the small bell||—the abbess cheat !  
 Before the summer moon shall shine  
 With pure white ray, the black-robed nun  
 To the green woodland must be won !

\* It seems most probable that she had not actually become a nun, but was merely an inmate in the nunnery; perhaps for the double purpose of being educated, and at the same time kept out of the way of harm.

† Probably the abbess is meant.

‡ This lady, the chief object of the poet’s love and songs, was a native of Anglesea, and it is, perhaps, for that reason that he calls the nuns her sisters.

|| In Welsh “*clochyddes*”—an office in the Roman catholic service.



At length, apparently weary of his fruitless fidelity, he returned to the hospitable mansion of his patron; and the welcome manner in which he seems to have been again received, proves that his affection for the daughter had not produced any serious displeasure on the part of her father, however, from motives of prudence the latter might have thought it advisable to discountenance the attachment. The young poet seems also at this period to have been reconciled to his parents, between whose house and Gwern-y-gleppa his time was divided.

During the second residence with Ivor, Davyth ab Gwilym must in all probability have devoted much attention to the cultivation of his favourite pursuit, since we find him, about this period, elected to fill the post of chief bard of Glamorgan.\* His poetical reputation made him also a welcome, and, in some respects, a necessary guest at the festivals which, in those long-departed days of social cheer and princely hospitality, were common in the houses of the higher orders in Wales. The mansions of Ivor Hael and Llewelyn ab Gwilym were the frequent scenes of these festive assemblies, at which particular respect was shown to the sons of the *awen*.† And here it was that Davyth ab Gwilym seems to have had the first opportunity of signaling himself amongst his bardic compeers, in those poetical contests, formerly so frequent in Wales, and which are not even now wholly discontinued. It was at Emlyn, the seat of his uncle Llewelyn, that, on one of these occasions, the deep rooted enmity which existed between him and a brother bard named Rhys Meigan, had its origin, and became the fertile source of the most satirical and even virulent strains on both sides. The laurel in this "war of words" was, however, finally adjudged to the subject of this memoir, whose antagonist is even reported to have fallen dead on the spot, a victim to the unendurable poignancy of our poet's satire. Strange and incredible as this

\* Dr. Jones in his history of Wales says—"in 1530 he was elected to the bardic chair of Glamorgan, and in succeeding years composed several poetic pieces with a talent and taste hitherto denied to Welsh versifiers, and which entitle him to the epithet of the father of Welsh poetry."

† *Awen*, a Welsh word implying poetic genius, or inspiration.



incident may appear, it is in a great measure confirmed by one of Davyth ab Gwilym's effusions, in which he alludes with some minuteness, to the extraordinary occurrence.

Doubtless the happiest days of our bard's life were those that he spent in the house of Ivor Hael, which may be gathered from the poems that he wrote, breathing of enjoyment, high spirits, and fervent gratitude, while an inmate of that hospitable mansion.

In one of these spirited productions, we find him sending a messenger to Anglesea to acquaint his friends that he did not intend to return thither in consequence of the kind reception which he met with from Ivor. In that curious poem we have many interesting allusions both to the indoor pastimes and field sports of the times.

"Honours great for me are stored  
If I live, from Ivor's hand,  
Hound and huntsman at command,  
Daily banquet at this board,  
(Princely baron!) at the game  
With his piercing shafts to aim;  
And to let his falcons fly  
On the breezes of the sky.  
\* \* \*  
Dice and draughts, and every sport,  
Of Maesaleg's joyous court,  
Will the host who governs there  
Freely with the poet share."

In another poem, written previous to going on his clera\* expedition to North Wales, he thanks Ivor for the munificence with which he had been treated during his stay at Maesaleg.

"I obtained from thee the gifts I desired,  
Kind words and silver,  
And pure gold,  
And gay French arms;  
Abundance of mead and wine,  
Jewels fit for a second Tallesin."

\* The clera expedition means the tour or circuit made by the bards of Wales once in three years, when in a high spirit of festal hospitality they were received by the nobility and gentry of the country at their castles and mansions with incredible cordiality of welcome: this noble entertainment they returned by reciting their poems composed in praise of their patrons. For the best account extant of the bards and bardism of Wales we refer the reader to Stephens' "Literature of the Kymry," recently published, one of the most complete and comprehensive of works ever dedicated to the service of Wales; and a valuable acquisition to every student or writer on Celtic or European antiquities.

In a spirited poem also written on the occasion of his departure for North Wales, he expresses his gratitude to Ivor for what appears to have been a very acceptable present—that of a pair of buckskin gloves full of money; the right-hand glove filled with gold, and the left with silver,\* he says—

"From his grasp these gloves to gain,  
Maidens oft have vied in vain;  
For the bard to fair or friend,  
Ivor's gift will never lend."

He then proceeds to express his sense of his patron's liberality in a strain of considerable beauty, still extolling his buckskin gloves as superior to those of sheepskin, and such as were worn by the "surly Saxon;" an epithet with which he generally honours the English nation, and by reiterating the praises of his benefactor. But the opening couplet of this poem sufficiently explains how well Ivor deserved the surname of "the generous."

"All who Ivor's palace leave,  
Gold from Ivor's hand receive."

We shall conclude this Memoir with another poem addressed by the bard to our "nun:" it appears to be the first which he addressed to her after her entrance into the sacred sisterhood. From the poet's description of his three beauties Angharad, Doethgee, and Morvyth, it would appear that the two first were black-eyed, raven-haired brunettes; and the last, whom he calls—

"Maid of the glowing form and lily brow  
Beneath a roof of golden tresses."

was what in these days would be called a *blonde*.

"The dark-eyed maid my love hath won,  
And hence all food and rest I shun,  
Oh, did my heart another prize,  
None but the fool would deem me wise !

\* Mr. Arthur J. Johnes, appends the following interesting note:—"It was the custom of those times to make presents of money in gloves. When Sir Thos. More was chancellor, in the time of Henry VIII., a Mrs. Croker, for whom he made a decree against Lord Arundel, came to him to request his acceptance of a pair of gloves, in which were contained forty pounds in angels; he told her with a smile, that it would be ill manners to refuse a lady's present, but though he should keep the gloves, he must return the gold, which he enforced her to receive."—*Life of Sir John More, by Sir James Mackintosh, in Larner's Cyclopædia.*

Girl of my love, and can it be,  
 That the luxuriant birchen tree  
 Of summer, has no charms for thee?  
 That thou dost ceaselessly repeat  
 Thy Psalter in yon still retreat?  
 And that, oh, star-hued maid! thou art  
 Of yonder holy choir a part?

Hence with the bread and water—hence  
 With the vile crosses—and dispense  
 With pater nosters—and give o'er  
 The Romish monk's religious lore:  
 Join not in Spring the devotees,  
 Groves are more bright than nunneries;  
 Thy vows, oh! beauty, bright and mild!  
 With love cannot be reconciled;  
 The ring, the cloak, the verdant dress  
 Are better pledge of holiness.  
 Haste to the knotted birchen tree,  
 And learn the Cuckoo's piety;  
 There in the greenwood will thy mind  
 A path to heaven, oh! lady, find.  
 There Ovid's volume shalt thou read,  
 And there a spotless life we'll lead,  
 A life of liberty where rise  
 The woodbines o'er the precipice.  
 Doubt not there, too, thou mayst be "shriven,"  
 Full absolution may be given;  
 Nor is it harder to reach heaven  
 For those who make the groves their home  
 Than to the sojourners at Rome."

It appears Angharad paid but slight regard to these poetic flights, but became greatly attached to a monastic life from the commencement of her noviciate, and readily took the final vows which separated her from all further concerns with the world. However, she died soon after her entrance into the holy sisterhood; and a pathetic elegy on her death appears among the poems of Davyth ab Gwilym.

## ARDIDVIL,\*

WIFE OF GWILYM GAM, AND MOTHER OF THE CELEBRATED  
BARD DAVYTH AB GWILYM.

THIS lady lived in the fourteenth century; she was a native of South Wales, allied to some of the principal magnates of the land, and sister to Llewelyn ab Gwilym Vychan of Emlyn; a person of considerable importance in that part of the country, styled in some accounts lord of Cardigan, and was the proprietor of Dôl Gôch in that county.

About the year 1339 she was united to Gwilym Gam, but it would seem, not by the ceremonies of the church: such was the state of society in those days, that the omission of the holy rite was not considered either derogatory to morality or respectability. In speaking of the renowned son of this lady, hereafter to be noticed, from whom she derives her only claim to celebrity, his biographer, Arthur James Johnes, gives a different turn to this circumstance. He says, "whatever may have been Davyth ab Gwilym's pretensions to an illustrious descent, there is reason to believe that his birth was illegitimate, or, at least, that the union of his parents, if it had been previously sanctioned by legal rites, had not received the countenance of their friends." Ardidvil's husband, Gwilym Gam, was a descendant of Llywarch ab Brân, head of one of the "fifteen tribes," who composed the aristocracy of that division of Wales, and related by marriage to Prince Owen Gwyneth, a monarch no less distinguished as a patron of genius than by the valour and sagacity with which he protected the liberties of his country against the ambitious projects of Henry II. of England.

The residence of Ardidvil and her husband was at Bro Gynin, in the parish of Llanbadarn-vawr, Cardigan-shire, where, about the year 1340, she gave birth to a boy, who in after years became no less an honour to his family than the glory of his country as one of the most eminent of her bards. This was no other than the celebrated amatory poet Davyth ab Gwilym.

\* In Welsh written *Ardudvul*, but pronounced as above.



Of Ardidvil, personally, we have scarcely anything more to relate; but as parents, however obscure in their own lives, may be said to partake, in some degree, of the celebrity of their progeny, according to the plan of this work, we shall now proceed to give a slight sketch of the career of her illustrious son Davyth ab Gwilym. These we derive from the researches and arrangement of Dr. William Owen Pughe, John Humphreys Parry, Dr. Jones, and Arthur James Johnes, the latest biographer of that poet,\* who, in 1834, published an elegant English translation of his most select productions, accompanied with a memoir of his life, from which we transcribe the following interesting particulars:—

“One of the most remarkable consequences of the conquest of Wales by Edward I. was the depression of that lofty poetical spirit which had previously distinguished the Welsh nation. Before that event the Cambro-British bards appear to have devoted their genius to the grand theme of national independence. Habituated to regard the martial spirit of their countrymen as the only bulwark against foreign oppression, they naturally selected the single virtue of military prowess as the great subject of their eulogy and their songs. Hence it was, that with the destruction of their country's freedom, they appear to have lost the only object of their art, and the sole source of their inspiration—and nearly a century elapsed before we find any symptoms of its reviving influence. To this result other causes must have powerfully contributed: the jealous policy of the English authorities, by whom the bards were justly viewed as the great promoters of a spirit of independence among the people; the fanaticism of the mendicant friars, who appear to have denounced many of the refinements and amusements of life, as at variance with christianity—and above all, that general feeling of fear and despondency, which always pervades a recently subjugated nation, and destroys all sympathy with the joyous songs of the minstrel.”

\* To give each party their respective dues, I here subjoin a remark by the latter editor. “For the materials of the following life of Davyth ab Gwilym we are entirely indebted to the ingenuity and research of Dr. Wm. Owen Pughe. They were first published by him, in 1789, in the form of a biographical sketch, prefixed to the original poems. In the present arrangement of them I have for the most part adopted the memoir published by Mr. Humphreys Parry.”

"About the middle of the fourteenth century, the poetical genius of the Welsh began to break forth anew, but with its characteristics essentially changed: both in sentiment and style, the *awen* of the bards had undergone a complete revolution. We no longer meet in their works with those warlike scenes, and those songs in praise of the heroes of their country, which occurs so often in the poems of their predecessors. The Welsh minstrel was now content to tune his harp to themes of love and social festivity—and sportive allusions to objects of nature, and to the picturesque manners of that interesting period, were made to supply the place of lays in celebration of martial achievements. Whatever may have been lost in fire and sublimity by this transition was, perhaps, more than compensated by the superior polish, vivacity, and imaginativeness which distinguish the bards of the new school. The dawn of the epoch here noticed was signalized by the birth of Davyth ab Gwilym, on whom the appellation of the Petrarch of Wales has, with some degree of propriety, been bestowed. A full and authentic history of the life of Davyth ab Gwilym would be a great literary treasure; not only would it throw much light upon the poetry and manners of his age, it would, no doubt, add also to our historical knowledge. Unhappily, however, the only materials extant for such a work consist of a few traditionary anecdotes preserved in manuscript, and the allusions to his personal history contained in the bard's own poems. The exact year of his birth is involved in obscurity, but we possess data from which it may be conclusively established, that he began, and ended his days within the 14th century. Even the spot of his nativity has furnished food for controversy; and our bard may be numbered among the men of genius, whose birthplace has been a subject of patriotic rivalry; accordingly, on one hand, we find the island of Anglesea\* strenuously laying claim to this honour, while on the other it appears to be satisfactorily proved that

\* "The ground on which it has been contended, that the poet was a native of Anglesea, is that there was a house called Bro Gynin, in that island; but it is plain that Bro Gynin in South Wales, must be the place of his birth; for in many passages of his works he called himself a native of Bro Cadell, or the country of Cadell. Now this term is a poetical appellation for South Wales. Rodri Mawr, sovereign prince of the entire principality, having in the year 877 divided his dominions between his three sons, when South Wales fell to the share of Cadell."  
—*A. J. Johnson's Life of Davyth ab Gwilym.*

the poet first saw the light, about the year 1340, at a place called Bro Gynin, in the parish of Llanbadarn-vawr, in the county of Cardigan. It is recorded in an old poem which has been handed down to us, that Taliesin, the most celebrated of the ancient Welsh bards, foretold the honour that awaited this spot, in being the birthplace of a minstrel, whose song would be *as the sweetness of wine*.<sup>\*</sup>

It has been mentioned, doubtfully, that if the union of Davyth's parents had been previously sanctioned by legal rites, it had not received the countenance of their friends. It is added by his biographer, that "at no distant period, however, a reconciliation must have been effected, as the embryo bard was taken in his infancy under the protection of his uncle, Llewelyn ab Gwilym, who is stated to have been a man of some parts. He accordingly became his nephew's tutor, and seems to have discovered in him the early indications of that particular talent, for which he was afterwards so conspicuous, and in the cultivation of which Llewelyn afforded his young pupil all the encouragement and assistance in his power.

About the age of fifteen, Davyth returned to his paternal home, in Cardiganshire, where, however, he resided but a short time, owing, as it would appear, to the unpleasant bickerings that took place between him and his parents, in consequence of his satirical propensities, which, even at that early age he could not restrain. Some of his effusions written during this period, have been preserved, and whatever ingenuity they may evince, considering the years of the writer, they are by no means indicative of his filial affection. These domestic altercations caused the young bard once more to be separated from his natural guardians, and we accordingly find him at an early age, enjoying at Gwern-y-gleppa, in Monmouthshire, the friendship and patronage of Ivor Hael, a near relative of his father, and lord of Maesaleg in that country.

There we leave him for the present, and when the reader desires his future acquaintance, the rest of his life will be found in connection with the memoirs of Angharad, Deethgee, and Morvyth of Mona, as they occur in successive order here named, in the different portions of this work.

<sup>\*</sup> In Welsh the passage runs, "Brydydd a' i gywydd tal gwin."



## LADIES OF THE COURT OF KING ARTHUR.

CAERLEON on the river Usk, in Monmouthshire, was the grand city and seat of sovereignty of the Silurian princes, and it was here that king Arthur held his court. "He had also a palace in Cornwall, probably at Lestwithiel; another at Penrhyn, in Cumberland."\* The northern minstrels frequently in their ballads state his palace to have been at Carlisle, which is frequently miswritten for Caerleon, a piece of misrepresentation founded on the local egotism of the writers.

Observing on the ancient state of the city of Caerleon Warner says, "here it was that Arthur received the crown from the hand of Dubricius, the archbishop, on being elected the king of all Britain; and here he instituted that order of chivalry, the round table, which makes so conspicuous a figure in the old romances." And Seldon, in a note to Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, says, "at Caerleon, in Monmouthshire, after his victories, a pompous celebration was made at Whitsuntide, whither were invited divers kings and princes of the neighbouring coasts; and with them his queen Gwinever (*Gwenhwyvar*), with her ladies keeping these solemnities, in the several conclaves, for the British story makes it, according to the Trojan custom, that in festival solemnities both sexes should not sit together."

"These jollities, however," says Warner,† "seem to have had but an unfavourable effect on the morals of the ladies. The fair Gwinever, Arthur's consort, and her female attendants, if not dealt unjustly by, were certainly not Lucretias; and the *tea-tables* of ancient Caerleon must have buzzed with whispers somewhat discreditable to their prudence." The facetious Warner confesses that the sole source of his information on these delicate points was the legendary ballad called the "Boy and the Mantle." But whatever merit may be attached to that truly humorous and very picturesque production, it should be borne in recollection that, after all, it is but an ingenious satirical romance; and to

\* Hughes' *Horæ Britannicæ*.

† Author of a tour entitled "*A Walk through Wales*" and various Tours in different parts of *England*.



take the character of Arthur's court ladies from such a source would be about as liberal and just, as to look for a correct description of the palace inmates and drawing room visitors of George the Third and queen Charlotte in the pages of that laughter-loving wag Peter Pindar.

Whatever censure may attach to the fame of some of the ladies of the court of Arthur (and what courtly atmosphere, ancient or modern, was ever found taintless?) happily there were some who merited and won the highest meed of popular applause that the most virtuous of their contemporaries could award. Foremost among these, both by seniority and her position, was the venerable princess Eigr, mother of the king, stated to have been in her time one of the most beautiful women in Britain. The chronicles are silent as to her further claims to celebrity; and it is probable, from her age, that she was not a frequent visitor to the court of her royal son, dazzling as it is reputed to have been, by the presence of the youth, beauty, and magnificence, of the fair worthies who became the satellites of the scene, and sparkled in the atmosphere of the great hero of the age. Had her conduct been in any degree blameable, or at variance with her rank, the pen of the bardic satirists would no more have spared her than other less distinguished offenders against propriety whom they placed on the records of censure.

"Enid, the daughter of earl Yniwl, is celebrated in the Triads, with Dyvyr Wallteuraidd, and Tegan Eurvron, as the three 'gwenriain,' or exalted ladies of the court of Arthur. She was the wife of Geraint ab Erbin. She became a distinguished personage in Welsh romance, and is the heroine of the Mabinogi of Geraint ab Erbin, the accomplished editor of which says of her—'throughout the broad and varied region of romance it would be difficult to find a character of greater simplicity and truth than that of Enid. Conspicuous for her beauty and noble bearing, we are at a loss whether most to admire, the untiring patience with which she bore all the hardships she was destined to undergo, or the unshaken constancy and devoted affection which finally achieved the triumph she so richly deserved.' *The bards of the middle ages have frequent allusions to her in their poems; and Davyth ab Gwilym could pay no*

higher compliment to his lady-love than to call her a second Enid."<sup>\*</sup>

Then we have what in the original Welsh is called *Teir gohoyw rïein*, signifying the three sprightly ladies, or the witty belles, of the court of Arthur, in the persons of Angharad don Velen, (Angharad the brunette),<sup>†</sup> daughter of Rhytherch the generous; Annan the daughter of Maig Mygotwas; and Perwyr, daughter of Rhn Rhyveddmawr.

Tegan Eurvron, before referred to, as one of the three exalted ladies of the court of Arthur, was the wife of Caradoc of the brawny arm; and bore the fame of pre-eminence in chastity and other amiable virtues; thus was she appropriately associated in the Triad, with the highly extolled Enid. Among the comments on the "Boy and the Mantle" her claim to further notice is incidentally brought forward. Warton imagines that strange tale to be taken from an old French piece, entitled "Le Court Mantel;" "but," adds Bishop Percy, from whose "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry" we transplant this story, "after all it is most likely that all the old stories concerning king Arthur are originally of British growth, and that what the French and other southern nations have of this kind, were at first exported from this island." The Rev. Evan Evans, editor of "Specimens of Welsh Poetry," confirms this opinion. He says the story of the "Boy and the Mantle" is taken for what is related in some of the old Welsh manuscripts of Tegan Eurvron, a lady of king Arthur's court; she is said to have possessed a mantle that would not fit any incontinent woman: this, which the old writers say was reckoned among the curiosities of Britain, is often alluded to by the old Welsh bards.

How the ladies of the court of Arthur have been depicted by the pen of an ancient satirist shall appear, by the insertion of the ballad so often referred to, called the "Boy and the Mantle." This quaint relic of the olden times, we have found necessary both to modernize and deprive of certain

<sup>\*</sup> William's Biography of eminent Welshmen, p. 145, wherein is quoted lady Guest's *Mabinogion* ii., 165, and *Myv. Arch.* ii., 73.

<sup>†</sup> Angharad don Velen, is literally, Angharad of the yellow skin; the Welsh, like the English language, being deficient of the elegant and expressive French term *brunette*.

objectionable phrases on the score of delicacy, in order to make it presentable in the circle of our fair readers. Pity it were that they should be deprived of so much mirthful matter, when a little judicious weeding may remove the embargo laid by modern taste on its production.

#### THE BOY AND THE MANTLE.

IN Caerleon dwelt king Arthur, a prince of passing might,  
And there maintain'd his table round beset with many a knight;  
And there he kept his Christmas with mirth and princelike cheere,  
When, lo! a strange and cunning boy before him did appeare.

A kirtle and a mantle this boy had him upon,  
With brooches, rings, and owches full daintilie bedone,  
He had a sarke of silk, too, about his middle meet,  
And thus with seeming curtesy he did king Arthur greet.

"God speed thee brave king Arthur, thus feasting in thy bowre,  
And Gwinever thy goodlie queen, that fair and peerless flowere:"  
Then straitway from his bosome a little wand he drew,  
And with it eke a mantle of wondrous shape and hue.

Now have thou here king Arthur, now have thou this of mee,  
And give unto thy comelike queene, all shapen as you see,  
*No wife it shall become e'er, that once has been to blame,*  
Then ev'ry knight in Arthur's court glanced slylie at his dame.

Then first came lady Gwinever, the mantle she must trye;  
This dame she was new-fangled and of a roving eye;  
When she had tane the mantle, and with it all was cladde,  
From top to toe it shiver'd as though with sheers bestradde,\*

On: while it was too long far, another while too shorte,  
And wrinkled on the shoulders in most unseemly sorte;  
Now green, now red it seemed, then all of sable hue,  
"Beeshrew me," quoth king Arthur, "I think thou be'est not true."

Then down she threw the mantle, no longer would she stay,  
But storming like a fury to her chamber flung away.  
She curst the rascal weaver who had the mantle wrought,  
And doubly curst the froward imp that here the mantle brought.  
"I'd rather live in desarts beneath the greenwood tree,  
Than here, base king, among thy grooms, the sporte of them and thee."

Sir Kay called forth his lady, and bade her to come neare,  
Yet, dame, if thou be guilty, I pray thee now forbear;  
This lady pertly giggling with forward step came on,  
And boldly to the little boy with fearless face is gone.

When she had tane the mantle with purpose for to wear,  
It shrunk up to her shoulder and left her nearly bare:  
The king and ev'ry gay knight that was in Arthur's court,  
Gibed, and laugh'd, and flouted, to see that pleasant sport.  
Soon down she threw the mantle, no longer bold or gay,  
But with a face all fierce and wan to her chamber slunk away.

\* Cut in shreds.

Then forth there came an old knight a pattering o'er his creed,  
And proffer'd to the little boy five nobles to his meed ;  
" And all the time of Christmas plum-porridge shall be thine,  
If thou wilt let my ladye within the mantle shine."

A saint this ladye seemed, with step demure and slow,  
And gravelle to the mantle with mincing step doth goe ;  
When she the same had taken, that was so fine and thin,  
It shrivell'd all about her, and shew'd her dainty skin.

Ah ! little did *her* mincing, or *his* long prayers bestead,  
She had no more hung on her than a tassel and a thread :  
And down she threw the mantle with terror and dismay,  
And with a face of scarlet to her chamber hied away.

Sir Caradoc call'd his lady, and bade her to come neare,  
" Come, lady, win this mantle and do me credit here ;  
Come, win this mantle, lady, for now it shall be thine  
If thou hast never done amiss since first I made thee mine."

The lady gently blushing with modest grace came on,  
And now to try the mantle courageously is gone ;  
When she had tane the mantle, and put it on her backe,  
About the hem it seemed to wrinkle and to cracke.

" Lye still," she cried, " O mantle ! and shame me not for nought,  
I'll freely own whate'er amiss or blameful I have wrought :  
Once kiss'd I sir Caradoc beneath the greenwood tree,  
But once I kiss'd Caradoc's mouth before he married mee."

When thus she had her shriven and her worst fault had told,  
The mantle strait became her right comelle as it shold ;  
Most rich and fair of colour, like gold it glitt'ring shone,  
And much the knights of Arthur's court admired her ev'ry one.

Then towards king Arthur's table the boy he turn'd his eye,  
Where stood a boar's head garnish'd with bayes and rosemarye,  
When thrice he o'er this boar's head his little wand had drawne,  
Quoth he, " there's ne'er a cuckold's knife can carve this head of brawne."

Then some their whittles sharpen'd on whetstone and on hone,  
Some threw them under the table and swore that they had none—  
Caradoc had a small knife of steel and iron made,  
And in an instant through the skull he thrust the shining blade.  
He thrust the shining blade in, right easily and fast,  
And ev'ry knight in Arthur's court full plenty had to taste.

The boy brought forth a horn then, all golden was the rim,  
Salth he, " no cuckold ever can set mouth unto the brim ;  
No cuckold can this little horn lift fairly to his head,  
But he on this or that side will full quick his liquor shed."

Some shed it on their shoulder, some shed it on their thighe,  
And he that could not hit his mouth was sure to hit his eye ;  
Thus he that was a cuckold was known to ev'ry man,  
Sir Caradoc lifted easily and won the golden can.

History informs us that Arthur had successively three  
wives of the name of Genever, or Gwenhwyvar ; and that

his last queen was seduced from him by a profligate youth, his near relative. The affair is thus stated by Hughes :— "Modred, the nephew of Arthur, being the son of his sister Anna, married to a chieftain in the north, acted a base and unworthy part. This young prince seduced the queen, and eloped with her into Cumberland, where he fomented disturbances; and rather than submit himself to his uncle and his sovereign, he raised a civil war; and thus the British princes, who ought to have had one common interest, spent their strength in domestic feuds."

If the ladies of the court of Arthur, as Warner says, were not all Lucretias, most assuredly the major portion of the gentlemen were far from being Scipios. If the king himself was unfortunate in his queen, it is probable that he set the first example of infidelity. It stands on record that Arthur had three mistresses of the names of Garwen, Gwyl, and Indeg, all of the rank of princesses; and some of his courtiers were far from being second to their sovereign in their degrees of profligacy.

Those curious historical records of the Welsh called the Triads, from the classification in the number three, state the names and rank of several of Arthur's courtiers, whence it will be seen that the "Llys"\* of Carleon on Usk was made brilliantly attractive by the presence of princes, military heroes, bards, divines, and other eminencies of the times. There were three sovereign princes, we are told, who preferred leaving their own dominions for the felicities to be found in a life of pleasure at the court of Arthur. These were Cadair Ail Seithin Seidi; Goronw, the son of Echel; and Fleudur. Cadair is also joined with Gwalchmai and Gadrwy, to form a Triad of the three noblemen in the court Arthur who were eminent for their courtesy and generous behaviour to strangers, and so greatly were they beloved that no one could refuse granting whatever wish they expressed.†

Caradoc of the brawny arm,‡ the "sir Caradoc" of the romances, seems to have held the post of Master of the Horse,

\* Llys is the Welsh word for "palace" or "court."

† Myrtylan Archæology, page 2, 4, 13, 19, 74, 77, 79.

‡ In Welsh, Caradoc Vralch vras. This chieftain was one of the great grandsons of Brychan Brecheinlog, and succeeded in his turn to become like his ancestor the sovereign prince of Brecheinlog, or the district now called Breconshire.



and is celebrated in several of the Triads for his manly bearing and warlike prowess. In one of them he is called "one of the three *Cadwarchogion*, or knights of battle of the Isle of Britain; and in the following englyn or epigram, attributed to Arthur himself, he is called the pillar of Wales:—

"These are my three cavaliers of battle,  
Mael the tall, and Llyr the armipotent,  
And the pillar of Wales, Caradoc."

That is to say, they were the best of all battle horsemen; and, therefore, dominion and power were given them as they chose. And it was their disposition to do nothing but what was discreet and just, to whatever country or power they came. Another Triad celebrates Caradoc's noble steed *Lluagor*, the "opener of the host of foes." But the principal glory of Caradoc was in being the husband of the eminently lovely and virtuous Lady Tegan Eurvron, who is in fact the heroine of the "Boy and the Mantle," and other romances. He is mentioned in terms of high admiration by Aneurin, in his *Gododin*, for his exploits at the battle *Cattraeth*, where he is supposed to have fallen. In the Armorican romances he is always introduced as one of the principal knights of the round table.

The three celebrated "compeers" of the court of Arthur were *Trystan ab March*; *Rhiawd*; and *Ail Cynvia Cov Dalldav*—of whose career nothing particular is related. Another of the courtiers was *Drem ab Dremidith*, names literally signifying "Sight," the "son of Seer." He was renowned as a warrior, as well as a mystic philosopher. His father was somewhat of a bard, sage, or utterer of pithy sayings—one of which runs thus:—

"Hast thou heard what Dremidith sang—  
An ancient watchman on the castle walls?  
A refusal is better than a promise unperform'd."

*Drem*, the father, is celebrated in one of the tales of the *Mabinogion* for his astonishing power of vision. It is there said of him that "when the Gnat arose in the morning with the sun, he could see it from *Gelliwig*, in Cornwall, as far off as *Penblaethon* in North Britain." In a composition by *Iolo Goch* (the bard of *Owen Glyndwr*) in 1400, he is said to have been so sharp-sighted that he could descry a mote

in the sunbeam in the four corners of the world. Notwithstanding the exaggerating spirit of romance which array these wild statements, the author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen" is of opinion that Drem is an historical character, founding his conviction on the above quoted sayings of his father.\*

The three eminent naval commanders of the court of Arthur were Geraint ab Erbyn, Gwenwynwyn ab Nav, and March ab Merchion. Each of these had six score ships, and six score men in each ship. Edeyrn was one of the most valiant knights of this court, celebrated for his successful warfare against the Romans. Among these courtiers were three knights of such surpassing eloquence that they were known as the three silver-tongued knights. Their persuasive powers were so very great that no one could refuse whatever they might ask. These were respectively of the names of Drudwas ab Tryffin, Gwalchmai ab Gwyar, and Elywlod ab Madoc ab Uther.

It is pleasing to learn that among these notables of lofty pre-eminence that humble and low-born personal merit was acknowledged and duly honoured. On terms of equality with these courtly worthies were three young men of exceeding worth, but void of the advantages of illustrious birth, classed as the "three plebeian knights of the court of Arthur." Their names were Eineon ab Gooron, Glethog ab Gwyn, and Geraint Heer.† They were so distinguished for their transcendent wisdom, courtesy, and other excellent qualities, that the humbleness of their lowly birth was overlooked. Not among the least, but the most profoundly honoured and esteemed by the loftiest of the land, the wisest and the best, were "the three wise bards of the court of

\* He refers, as the source of his information to Englynion y Clywed Myr, Arch. i., 24.

† These names are written in Welsh Eineon ab Gwron, Gleddog ab Gwyn, and Geraint Hir, but pronounced as in the text. The *se* in a Welsh word is always sounded as the English *oo*. It may here be mentioned, that the "ab" so frequently occurring in these pages, appended to Welsh proper names, is an abbreviation of the word "mab," signifying "son." The sharp and peculiar articulation of Welshmen in former days, induced the English to think they called it "ap;" hence the adoption of the latter by those who have written on Cambrian subjects; especially when the object has been to hold Welsh peculiarities up to ridicule.

Arthur," in the persons of Catwg,\* Taliesin, and Llywarch hén. Their principles were said to have been so excellent that they never admitted any thing into their literary productions that was not dictated by wisdom and virtue.

We shall now conclude our observations on the worthies of the court of Arthur, male and female, with a brief notice of the most curious trio of all that brilliant assemblage; namely, the Holy Bachelors. There were three personages included in this courtly train called "the three *Gwynvbydd*, or holy bachelors of the isle of Britain," who were held in high esteem. For the satisfaction of our lady readers who may doubt the possibility of such creatures as "holy bachelors," we shall endeavour to prove that these were no fictitious beings, but veritably what they pretended to be. They were in fact what we may describe as religious knights; ecclesiastics, who deemed it no disparagement of their christian profession and holy orders to don the warrior's coat of mail in defence of the church and people, so frequently molested in that age by the pagan barbarians who infested the country. In modern times the knights of Rhodes, of the Holy Sepulchre of Malta, and of St. John of Jerusalem, bear a modified resemblance to the holy bachelors of the age of king Arthur.

As various works on Welsh antiquities have treated on the history and traditions of king Arthur, it will be unnecessary here to dilate further on that subject. But we shall indicate to those unenviable worthies of our day whose apathy and parsimony have united to keep them ignorant of the annals of their country, where such information may be found. We refer them especially to Warrington's "History of Wales;" Price's "Hanes y Cymry;" Williams's "Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen;" Rees's "Welsh Saints;" Lady Charlotte Guest's "Translation of the Mabinogion," or "Ancient Romances of Wales;" Rees's "Liber Landavensis;" and Stephens' "Literature of the Kymry."

† The name of Catwg appears misplaced in this Triad, as that eminent personage is principally known as a philosophical ecclesiastic, and little as a bard. It is probable that his name was inserted by the mistake of a transcriber, instead of that of the illustrious Aneurin, which would have been entirely appropriate.



## LADY WILLIAM BEAUCLERK,

OF PLAS-Y-NANT IN THE VALE OF CLEWYD.

THIS excellent lady was of the highly respectable family of the Thelwalls, whose numerous branches have so long spread far and wide in the vale of Clewyd and elsewhere; and wherever that name occurs, it is always accompanied with every honourable association. She was the only daughter of a dignitary of the church, renowned for his munificent spirit, so frequently exemplified in his day—the Rev. Dr. Carter Thelwall, both of Plas-y-nant, Denbighshire, and of Redburn in Lincolnshire. To estimate the worth and excellence of this lady, both while known as Miss Carter Thelwall, and as lady William Beauclerk, it will be necessary to describe the habits and manners of her father, who was her honoured model in acts of liberality.

“The poorer and unprovided clergy of the neighbourhood became the especial objects of Dr. Thelwall’s generosity; but such was the delicate manner in which he conferred his favours that it was well said ‘his left-hand knew not what his right-hand did.’ A third person was never present on these occasions, and his gifts were always made easy to the receiver, accompanied with expressions synonymous with, ‘my dear sir, it is only a bit of waste paper—good morning; to-morrow I shall expect the pleasure of your company to dinner.’ On disengaging hands, the befriended found his own full of the *sweetest notes*, that ever banished thence the discords of indigence, and chased away the sounds of melancholy.”\*

The following account by Edward Pugh, of his own descent from the neighbouring hills upon Plas-y-nant, describes that elegant spot, and exhibits the owner and

\* *Cambria Depleta*, p. 435.

his family to great advantage. That agreeable artist and author has pourtrayed the scenic charms of the place in language as descriptive as his pencil could have drawn them :—

“Still descending along the concave side of this hollow, and through a small farm yard, the stranger suddenly comes to a sylvan scene, the most quiet and rural that can be conceived, where peace seems ever to reign, unruffled by ambition—and where the solitary cottager, protected on all sides by towering mountains above him, feels secure from the asperity of the winter’s storm, and enjoys happiness through the medium of his own industry. At the lower extremity of the beautiful lawn adjoining the farm yard, is a railed fence and a gate, that leads to a thick wood; embosomed in which is the picturesque moss-covered cottage—

“ ————— close  
 Environed with a ring of branching elms  
 That overhang the thatch, itself unseen  
 Peeps at the vale below, so thick beset  
 With foliage of dark redundant growth.”

“A few yards further an effect like enchantment is produced, by the prompt appearance of the handsome gothic villa, Plas-y-nant, in a small verdant opening, surrounded by an almost impenetrable wood, of such a variety of species as it would be endless to enumerate. It is watered by an ever-babbling stream, which, impelled by every successive fall, rushes with a murmuring noise through the deep glen to the meadows below. This handsome box, with the tall trees about it, and the conic hill above, is a sweet picture; and it may be considered as such from other points of view. This little elysium owes its first cultivation, and the house its existence, to Thelwall Price, Esq., of Bathavarn Park, who erected it about the year 1760. The estate next passed into the possession of Dr. Carter Thelwall, and by him the spot was improved, and the house repaired, and made convenient, annually to entertain his friends of the vale. They first dined at the mansion, and the ladies and gentlemen, as they felt inclined, walked or rode the mile to tea and the lightsome dance.

"The great stillness of the woods was excellently calculated to give effect to the soft and mellifluous sounds of the flute, which always upon these occasions was touched by the fingers of skilful performers; the doctor himself was an excellent player upon this instrument; always happy to contribute to the amusement of his friends, he would conceal himself in the dark and silent recesses of the wood, and delight them with the melody of a Florio, the execution of a Nicholson, or the still more bewitching performance of an Humpreys."

When Dr. Carter Thelwall died every class of society in this neighbourhood felt the severity of their loss; nor, indeed, was his loss less felt in other places. The Chester Infirmary found twice every year the sum of fifty pounds sterling deposited in the letter box, by an unknown hand, which discontinued only on the demise of this good man.

Emulating the habits of her excellent father, as did the lady of this memoir especially, "doing good by stealth," and living unostentatiously amid the seclusions of private life, it will not be surprising that but little matter for forming a biographical memoir has come with our reach.

Lord William Beauclerk, on his marriage with her, as the only daughter and heiress of Dr. Carter Thelwall, became the possessor of this estate.

Edward Pugh remarks, "she was a lady of most amiable manners, and well taught in the school of honour and humanity; she trod in the steps of her good father and mother; but died a few years after her marriage."\*

\* For further notice of the family of the Thelwalls, the reader is referred to the Memoirs of Catherine of Berain in this work.

## BELLA THE FORTUNETELLER.

AMONG the illustrations to his "Cambria Depicta," Edward Pugh has introduced a likeness of this Cambrian Pythoness. It is a face of decided beauty, considering the age of the original, and thoroughly Welsh in its character; and were it not that she was known to be of a sisterhood of impostors might pass for a female in the middle ranks, of some respectability. Pugh's account of his visit to her dwelling at Denbigh is amusing.

"Here lived, a few years ago, a fortuneteller of the name of Sionet\* Gorn. On her death it was not likely that so lucrative an office should be suffered to lie dormant; and it has ever since been filled up by two *wonderful women*; of whom it is reported that they can see into futurity with *half an eye*, and that many of their remarkable predictions have been eventually verified. Among their devotees I had the curiosity to pay a visit to the one most in repute. I was requested to take a seat in the passage, the lady being then deeply engaged in her calculations on the fate of a man, who was weak enough, as I understood, to come from Barmouth, a distance of sixty miles, to consult this old woman. I could plainly hear their conversation. It seems that this person had a complaint on him, similar to a consumption, which was not understood by the faculty of the neighbourhood; but which he fancied to have been the effect of a curse, on a visit to Llanelian Well, by some secret enemy. She managed this man's case with a good deal of art, and it may be added, with excellent advice. She told him that he might easily prevent any mischief to himself, by frequent petitions to the Almighty; and that he might rest assured that if he did not succeed, that the fault was his own, in not praying with that degree of fer-

\* Sionet is pronounced Shonet.



veny which his case required. But that, if he should prove sincere, he would get the better of his complaint in a short time. After paying his fee he was dismissed, and I was ushered into the presence of this awful divineress. I was requested to take a chair opposite to her's, when she wished I would tell her the business I came upon, and be free and communicative. I took out my sketch-book ; but being dilatory in my reply, 'come, come,' said she, 'I know your concerns ; you are bashful, a thing very common with those who apply to me ; but as here are only you and I in the room, you need not be under the least apprehension of being heard.' 'But,' continued she, 'I know your business and employment : you are a merchant, and are travelling among your correspondents in this country ; but you have been somewhat unhappy for some time, and (with a smile and a bending of the head) you are in love with a pretty lady, whom at present you cannot obtain ; but, be not too much cast down, the lady is yours.' Upon this I replied, 'that she had well predicted my case : that I had accordingly partly secured the lady already ; but wished to know if she liked her, at the same time shewing her her own portrait, in sketching which I had been tolerably successful. She appeared very angry ; and whatever use I intended to make of it, she said she cared very little ; she was conscious of having done no harm to any one. The proffered fee, however, appeased her resentment, and we parted very good friends. The money which this woman gets in this way enables her and her sprightly daughter to live and dress well ; and her respectable appearance only increases her consequence among the deluded, who are eager to listen to her jargon and nonsense.'

Edward Pugh concludes his notice of this impostor with a regret, since the same laws govern Wales as England, that our magistrates do not put down the nuisance here as in the latter country. But the fact is, though apparently unknown to Mr. Pugh, that fortunetellers are in reality more numerous in England, allowing for the difference of geographical extent, than in Wales. The evil will probably linger among us as long as our girls *find fun* in fortunetellers, and continue to

receive such an inferior degree of education to the boys of their families. While young ladies, who ought to know better, continue to find amusement in having their fortune told, they little consider that they are perpetuating an evil to society, that would gradually decline, and in time altogether cease, but for their foolish encouragement. While they are taken with the fine black eyes, dusky skin, jetty locks, and picturesque red cloak of the gypsy fortuneteller—and especially their all-absorbing prate about the *young gentlemen who admire them so much*—poor simpletons! they little think that the dark object before them is the subtle member of a race of the most vulgar and impudent of impostors that ever clogged the wheels of national advancement either in intellectual or industrial progress—whose daily bread-winning is lying, thieving, and deception. That, at the moment of their intercourse with her, she is sagely measuring their minds, insulting their understanding, picking their pockets, and laughing in her sleeve, to think what shallow dupes young ladies of good families and fine modern education can be made. At the same time, perhaps, shrewdly weighing their votary's limited modicum of common sense, against what they well know is often possessed by the humblest of the "hard-handed daughters of labour," that ever trundled a mop or flourished a dish-clout.\*

\* The Intelligent reader will perceive according to the alphabetical arrangement of this work that the ancient and modern memoirs are here necessarily intermixed. At the same time it is to be noted, that by a reference to the different epochs in which these characters flourished, the book may be read according to the order of chronology. Thus the candid examiner, on consulting the biographies of succeeding periods (however placed or separated according to this plan), may find the attempt to render it a BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF WALES, not altogether a failure, even in this first attempt at such an arduous undertaking.

## BOADICEA,

WIDOW OF KING PRASUTAGUS, AND QUEEN OF THE ICENI.

THE original name of this princess, in Welsh, was *Areg-wedd Voeddawg*;\* after her triumph over the Romans, her country, it would appear, conferred on her the honourable appellation of *Buddig*,† signifying victorious—which might fairly be rendered *Victoria*—by which arrangement our present gracious queen would have become the second, instead of the first of that name. The universal name, however, by which this heroine has become known to all posterity is *Boadicea*.‡

This warrior princess, the glory of her country, and the terror of its foes, has been treated almost as harshly by modern writers as by her ancient foes. The latter by their atrocious usage having driven her to a revolt, which ended in her discomfiture and suicide; while the former, by circulating an erroneous account of her identity, nearly assassinated her transcendent reputation as the famed martyr of ancient British patriotism, and vindicatress of outraged human nature.

Dr. Owen Pughe, in his “*Cambrian Biography*,” has most unaccountably confounded *Boadicea* with a contemporary warrior princess, the infamous *Cartismandua*, queen of the *Brigantes*, who betrayed the renowned *Caraetacus* into the power of the Romans. This singular mistake has misled other authors and antiquaries, who have repeated the error in several instances, but we shall cite one case only. *Taliesin Williams*, in a note to his prize translation of a Welsh ode on the British Druids, wherein he adopts Dr. Owen Pughe’s

\* Pronounced *Aregweth Voethog*, the full three syllables of each word being sounded.

† Pronounced *Beethig*.

‡ This name is variously written, *Xiphiline*; *Dion’s Epitomizer*, has it *Bouduca*; *Tacitus* calls her *Voadica*, and *Boudicia*; *Cauden* and others *Bee-*; but modern writers are now pretty well agreed in recognizing the *ard designation of Boadicea*.



opinion that Boadicea and Cartismandua are one and the same person, says—"whatever treachery may be imputed to the conduct of Boadicea towards the Romans, the classical reader *is accustomed to consider her* as any thing but a traitress to her own country. I have, therefore, in obedience to the popular opinion translated 'Foeddawg' by 'Cartismandua,' who is mentioned by the Roman authors as the betrayer of Caractacus." If the above lines can be in any measure construed into a defence of this princess, most assuredly they form a very lame and somewhat puzzling one. Never was a completer illustration of what is understood by the term "begging the question." He tacitly acknowledges the justice of the stigma on her fame, and yet, because "the classical reader *is accustomed to consider her* as anything but a traitress to her own country," he concludes his observation by actually recording her as such.

But the character of this great woman is susceptible of a more decided defence, and her vindication indisputable. It is rather strange that it did not occur to these authors, and others who have been misled by them, that the question has been absolutely set at rest by Tacitus, who describes Boadicea as queen of the Iceni, and Cartismandua as queen of the Brigantes. The latter is also recorded in the twenty-first and the twenty-second Triad as the daughter of Avarwy, who is said to have traitorously invited Julius Cæsar over to Britain, and in return for his treason, he and his adherents to the Roman invader received annually a large sum of gold and silver. Besides these lines of demarcation between the female sovereigns in question, Boadicea was as famous for her patriotism and courage in a generous cause, as Cartismandua was notorious for her selfish policy and traitorous duplicity. The first was most exemplary in her private character of wife, widow, and mother—while the latter proved the scandal of her age and nation for an ill-spent life of adulterous intercourse, and the most open and shameless licentiousness.

The best version, perhaps, of the life and times of Boadicea, derived like others principally from Tacitus, is to be found in a recently published work, entitled "Researches



into the Ecclesiastical and Political State of Ancient Britain under the Roman Emperors;" by the Rev. Francis Thackeray, A.M. From this excellent work we shall commence our quotations with the destruction of the Druids and the conquest of Mona by the Roman governor Suetonius Paulinus, A.D. 59. "After conducting the civil and military operations of his government for two years with great success, Suetonius projected the conquest of Mona (now known as the isle of Anglesea), which, in those times, was the residence of the Arch Druid, and a principal resort of the disaffected Britons. With great promptitude and skill he effected a landing on the island with his army. Every thing that fanaticism could effect was now put into practice by the Druids to stimulate the efforts of their countrymen, and to appal the Roman invaders. Women clad in funeral attire, with dishevelled hair, and with burning torches in their hands, were every where seen running through the ranks of the British army. Multitudes of Druids and Druidæ stood in view, with uplifted hands imprecating curses on their enemies. These were sights and sounds to which the Roman soldiers were unaccustomed, and their firmness was for the moment shaken. But discipline resumed its ascendancy over their minds, and the sagacity and vigilance of their general assured them of victory. The contest was fierce but brief. A dreadful slaughter took place, not only of the British combatants, but also of the Druids. Their groves were cut down, their altars demolished, and themselves burned upon the very fires which they had prepared for their enemies. The fall of Druidism in Britain may be dated from that day; and, although it lingered for centuries afterwards in different parts of the island, it ceased to oppose any very material obstacle to the progress of christianity.

"Before Suetonius had time to complete the conquest of Mona, he was called back into Britain by the memorable insurrection of Boadicea, queen of the Iceni. This people had been permitted by the Romans to live under the sovereignty of their own native prince Prasutagus, who was remarkable for his wealth and possessions. Caister, his

capital (called Venta Icenorum by the Romans) was about three miles distant from the modern city of Norwich; where, according to Mr. Horsley, traces of the old walls are still visible. Adopting a policy then by no means unusual, and in the hope that his family would be allowed to remain in the quiet possession of a moiety of his kingdom, Prasutagus by his last will made the emperor his joint heir with his own two daughters. But the measure which he fondly hoped would be the security of his house proved the cause of its utter destruction. Upon the death of Prasutagus, the Roman soldiers, instead of evincing regard to his memory, or the least respect towards his widow and family, seemed to consider all his possessions as their own of right, and proceeded to commit every act of license and rapacity. When his widow, Boadicea, remonstrated against these outrages, instead of redress she experienced a treatment of which Nero, the reigning emperor himself, would scarcely have been guilty. The queen was beaten with stripes, her daughters were violated, and her kindred reduced to slavery. No tigress robbed of its young was ever more furious than this miserable woman. She flew at once to arms. She told her cruel wrongs to the neighbouring states. Her appeal to their feelings was successful; and one dreadful cry resounded from every quarter, 'destruction to the Romans!' More than 200,000 of her own people, of the Trinobantes, and other tribes now ranged themselves under her banners. They encountered the ninth Roman legion, which they cut to pieces. They took Camalodunum, London, and Verulanium, and destroyed 80,000 Romans and their allies in those cities, by fire, the sword, and the gibbet. But Suetonius was not to be dismayed. He collected his forces, which, although inconsiderable in point of number, consisted of ten thousand of the bravest and best troops in the world. He chose his ground with the greatest prudence, and awaited unmoved the furious onset of the enemy. Nothing that Cyrus or Alexander ever did could shew more strongly what discipline can effect against numbers than the result of the battle which ensued. On the one side we behold a multitude of assailants, not unused to war, athletic in frame, fierce

in courage, flushed with success, and burning with a desire of vengeance: on the other side we see a small body of men, supported by the proud consciousness that they were Roman soldiers. Notwithstanding all their efforts the assailants were repelled and routed. The heart sickens at the scene of slaughter that followed. Men, women, and the very beasts which were yoked to the chariots and wagons of the Britons were put to the sword. Boadicea, seeing all was lost, upheld the character of a British heroine to the last; she disappeared suddenly, and never more was seen. The general conclusion being that she had poisoned herself."

Anxious to award this princess a full measure of historical justice we have yielded to the temptation of giving another version of her career, even at the risk of some unavoidable repetition. The following account is from an interesting work by Galt, entitled "Pictures, Historical and Biographical:"—

"Boadicea was the wife of Prasutagus, who in expectation of procuring for his family and people the protection of the emperor, left by will Nero, along with his own daughters, coheirs to his treasures, which are represented as having been very great; but this precaution had quite a contrary effect. For no sooner was the deceased king laid in his grave than the imperial officers, in their master's name, seized on his effects. Boadicea, surprised at this unlooked for treatment, remonstrated with these officials; but met only with insult. Being a woman of noble and courageous spirit, she resented this insolence; and the brutal Romans, not only in spite, caused her to be publicly whipped, but her daughters to be ravished by the soldiers.

"This enormous outrage inflamed the whole country with the spirit of revenge, and the subjects of Prasutagus flew to arms. Boadicea, burning with a sense of justice for her own wrongs, and the degradation of her daughters, headed the insurrection, and exhorted the Britons to free themselves from slavery by putting their foreign oppressors to the sword. The Britons, roused by their sufferings, and animated by her call, fell upon the Romans in their different stations throughout the country, and without distinction of



age or sex, endeavoured to put them all to death. Thus eighty thousand were sacrificed to atone for a long career of insult and injustice.

"Paulinus\* the Roman general, on hearing of this avenging revolution, came suddenly from the isle of Mona,† where he was at the time, destroying that last asylum of British independence, abolishing the worship of the Druids, and cutting down their sacred groves. The army under Boadicea had in the meantime increased to a hundred thousand men, and the sense of her wrongs was sharpened by the exultations of the revenge which she had already taken. The whole forces which Paulinus could muster, did not amount to ten thousand, and with these, on the first alarm, he marched directly to London.

"He had not, however, been long there, till he learnt that the vast multitude assembled round the standard of Boadicea, did not consist alone of men, but was swelled by women and children, who having hastily flocked together, were not prepared to keep the field long. Paulinus was a bold and able general; his men had full confidence in his talents, and his own genius was undaunted by the circumstances in which he was placed. He immediately, therefore, determined to abandon London in the first instance, knowing that if he was successful he could easily regain it, and if defeated it would still afford him a place of refuge; and thus reinforced by his experience and resolution, he advanced towards the indignant queen. He found her with a prodigious multitude in battalions and squadrons, and bands of helpless old men, women, and children, occupying an extensive plain; and he drew up his army upon a narrow piece of ground with a forest behind, that screened him from being attacked in the rear.

"When Boadicea saw the enemy advancing, she placed her unfortunate daughters, by her side in a chariot, and driving amidst the numerous bands and squadrons devoted to her cause and their own, exhorted them to put forth all their spirit and strength. 'This will not be the first time,'

\* Suetonius Paulinus.

† Mona, the ancient name of Anglesea in North Wales.

she exclaimed, 'that the Britons have been victorious under the conduct of their queens. For my part I come not as one descended from royal progenitors, to fight for empire or spoil, but as one of the common people, to avenge the loss of liberty, the wrongs done to my own person, and the violated chastity of these my virtuous daughters. The Roman lust has grown to that height, that neither age nor sex escapes pollution; but the gods have already begun to punish their crimes, and we have seen one legion driven before us. If you consider the motives of this war, you will resolve to conquer or die, for surely it is nobler to fall honourably in defence of our rights and liberties, than be exposed again to the outrages of the Romans. But let those who would rather live, depart and be slaves—I am resolved to die!'"

The Romans in the meantime advanced to the charge; but having spent their quivers, their arrows being shot short of the Britons, they came forward with quick and close steps, and burst among the multitude, who were ill prepared to contend with the disciplined legions—a terrible confusion ensued; the women and children flying in all directions, marred the movements of the men. Boadicea was seen urging her chariot with frantic gestures in every quarter. The shouts of the Romans were drowned in the screams and cries of the helpless that were trodden down; upwards of forty thousand of the Britons were slain. The victory, from the moment of the close onset, was decidedly with Paulinus, and the Roman soldiers glutted their ferocity for the massacre of their countrymen. But Boadicea escaped, and vindicated the greatness of her resolution by swallowing poison, rather than submit to be taken by the conqueror.

In Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick's splendid work on British costumes, he has given an interesting pictorial groupe, with queen Boadicea placed centrally in her full historical dress; her daughters in a car behind, and all the surrounding Britons in varied costumes. The following is his account of the entire picture:—

"We are now arrived at the period coeval with the residence of the Romans in Britain, and in contemplating the

dress of this time—the first specimen that occurs, is that of the queen of the Iceni. Of Boadicea, or *Aregwedd Voed-dug*, *i.e.*, the victorious, as she was styled by her countrymen, of which epithet, the Romans latinized a name for her; ancient authors have been studious to preserve a particular description. Comparing, therefore, the accounts of Strabo with those of Dion Cassius, and by carefully examining the dresses of the Celtic females, on the columns of Trajan and Antoninus, the basso relievos found in this country, and the coins of Caracius, there is little difficulty in delineating the costume of this princess. Accordingly this plate represents her as a full grown handsome woman, but of a stern countenance, with long yellow hair \* flowing over her shoulders. She wears the *pais* much longer than that which was worn by the men, hence that word is now confined to designate the petticoat. It is woven checquerwise, of many colours, which, according to Strabo and Pliny, were purple, light and dark red, violet, and blue. Over this is the shorter garment, open on the bosom, and with short sleeves exposing the arms, termed *gun*, the Gaunacain,† of Varro, which reached as far as the knee, also of interwoven colours. On her shoulders was thrown her cloak, fastened by a fibula, and from her neck depended a golden torque.‡ Bracelets ornamented her arms and wrists, and rings her fingers. This was her usual habit, says Dion; but when she went to war, she bore in her hand a lance, and addressed her troops on a tumulus of turf. At the back are seen the Britons, busily employed in their warlike preparations, and the petoritum, or car of the queen, containing her daughters, one of whom is in sight.

The heroic history of this warrior queen has ever been a favourite subject for the display of their respective talents with our painters and poets—and few themes, so national and patriotic, have excited so much emulation, or have been

\* Whether this was flaxen hair, or discoloured by the chalky lixivium, is not mentioned.

† Gown, or outer garment.

‡ Pennant remarks that the *torch*, or *torques*, of the Gauls differed from those of the Britons, the latter being a collar of gold, or other metal, worn round the neck. Boadicea, he adds, had a large one of gold. For a learned and interesting article on the golden *torques*, see Pennant, vol. ii., p. 283.



so effectively illustrated. In the Cartoons exhibited at Westminster Hall, in 1843, there was no less than five 'Boadiceas,' by different artists, all of great merit, but varying in their degrees of excellence—and one of them winning a third-class premium of one hundred pounds. In the opinions of many, this masterly piece deserved a place among the first class productions, far more richly than some which were fortunate enough to obtain that enviable distinction. The following list of the 'Boadiceas,' in the Cartoons, will show how much this subject has engrossed the attention of artists, and fired the ambition of our aspirants in the fine and grand art of historic painting:—No. 69, Boadicea relating the outrages she and her daughters had suffered from the Romans, by R. N. Wornum; No. 73, Boadicea haranguing the Britons, by Spence; No. 74, Boadicea animating the Britons previous to the last battle with the Romans under Suetonius, by E. M. Ward; No. 78, Boadicea haranguing the Iceni, by H. C. Slous—this won the hundred pound premium as referred to above; No. 96, Boadicea attacking the Romans. There is no painter's name attached to this in the catalogue, but it is a production of much vigour, of which no artist need be ashamed."

Of the poems inspired by this eventful and spirit-stirring piece of history, the following ode by Cowper, is incomparably the best in our language:—

"When the British warrior queen,  
Bleeding from the Roman rods,  
Sought, with an indignant mien,  
Counsel from her nation's gods:

Sage, beneath the spreading oak  
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;  
Every burning word he spoke  
Full of rage, and full of grief.

"Princess! if our aged eyes  
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,  
'Tis because resentment ties  
All the terrors of our tongues.

"Rome shall perish—write that word  
In the blood which she has split;  
Perish, hopeless and abhorred,  
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

THE  
**HEROINES OF WELSH HISTORY;**  
 OR,  
*Memoirs of the Celebrated Women of Wales.*

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*PART THE SECOND.*

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‘ Rome, for empire far renown’d,  
Tramples on a thousand states ;  
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—  
Hark ! the Gaul is at her gates !

‘ Other Romans shall arise  
Heedless of a Roman’s name ;  
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,  
Harmony the path to fame.

‘ Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Arm’d with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.

‘ Regions Cæsar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway ;  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they !’

Such the bard’s prophetic words,  
Pregnant with celestial fire ;  
Bending, as he swept the chords  
Of his sweet, but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch’s pride,  
Felt them in her bosom glow ;  
Rush’d to battle, fought, and died—  
Dying, hurl’d them at the foe.

‘ Ruffians ! pitiless as proud !  
Heaven awards the vengeance due ;  
Empire is on us bestow’d,  
Shame and ruin wait upon you.’ ”

In the time of Caractacus and Boadicea, those mighty ones of Britain while a Roman colony—the one a king great in defeat, the other who preferred death to slavery ; the Ordovices inhabited North Wales, and the Silures the southern principality. The other considerable tribes of Britons were the Belgæ in the west, the Iceni in Norfolk and Suffolk, and the Tribantes on the banks of the Thames ; while the Brigantes, a powerful people, possessed Yorkshire, Lancashire, Durham, Westmoreland, and Cumberland. South Wales included at that time the counties of Hereford, Radnor, Brecon, Monmouth, and Glamorgan.—*Scott’s Life of Frontinus the Roman Conqueror of the Silures.*



## BRONWEN,

DAUGHTER OF LLYR, OR LEAR, KING OF BRITAIN, AUNT OF  
CARACTACUS, AND QUEEN OF MATHOLWCH, KING OF IRELAND.

IN the task that we have undertaken of unravelling old fabrics, in order to examine of what materials they have been originally woven, there are few intricacies more embarrassing than to trace out the true genealogies of certain ancient families, and separate them from the fictitious addendas of the early romancists. The family of King Llyr, or Lear, are of this description; in one account he is represented as the father of the three ladies who flourish in Shakspeare's "Tragedy of King Lear," of which Cordeilla, or Cordelia is the heroine. In the Welsh Triads, however, the only paternity attributed to this ancient sovereign is that of a son—the celebrated Brán ab Llyr; and a daughter named Bronwen,\* the subject of the present memoir.

This Brán ab Llyr, the brother of Bronwen, was the father of the renowned Caractacus, and accompanied him to Rome, where he remained with him during his captivity, and long after his liberation. On his submitting to become a hostage for his son, Caractacus returned to Britain and resumed his government. It was during the seven years in which Brán resided in this capacity at Rome, that St. Paul is said to have preached there, and under his ministry this British prince became a convert to christianity. In the "Triads of the Island of Britain," Brán ab Llyr is distinctly mentioned as the person who first introduced christianity into Britain; and he stands recorded in the "Genealogies of the Saints" as *Brán Fendigaid* (Brán the blessed), a distinction accorded to him in consequence of his being the first introducer of the "new faith" into his country. It is also stated there, that he brought with him to Britain two venerable personages to aid him in propagating christianity; these were St. Cyndav and St. Ilid, both of whom are described as "men of Israel," probably Jews, converted by the great apostle at Rome.

\* Bronwen signifies "white breast," from *bron*, breast, and *wen*, the feminine appellative of *white*.

With such a brother and nephew as Brân and Caractacus, added to the consideration of her royal birth, Bronwen may doubtless be deemed illustriously connected. Added to the records, few and brief, which time has spared, illustrative of the reality of the existence of this princess, it is gratifying to trace the verification of a general tradition respecting her by an accidental discovery made by certain modern antiquaries. Although she is presented as the heroine of some of those ancient Welsh Romances called the *Mabinogion*, that circumstance ought not to be urged as a point against her to invalidate the authenticity of her historical character. Such an objection would be as ill-founded as to deny the historical existence of Queen Elizabeth because she flourishes also in the romance of *Kenilworth*. The well attested authenticity of her life, as proved in the following details, goes far towards establishing a historical foundation for all those ancient tales the *Mabinogion*; and the presumed credit due to the historical *Triads* for their indisputable antiquity.

There is (or rather we should say there *was*, till lately) a *carn*, or ancient British grave, by the side of the river *Alaw* in the island of *Anglesea*, bearing the name of *Ynis Bronwen*, or *Bronwen's isle*, as the water had so formed it by forcing a channel between the *carn* and the shore. General tradition had long given this Celtic sepulchre as the burial place of the princess *Bronwen*, the subject of this memoir. All the known particulars of her life, and the recent exhumation of her remains, are thus stated in *Williams's "Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen."* "She is recorded in the *Triads* as having suffered the infliction of a blow, which, from its after consequences, was called one of the three fatal blows of the isle of Britain. In the *Mabinogi*, or '*Juvenile Tale of Brân Vendigaid*,' it is explained to us what is meant by the expression. *Bronwen*, who resided at *Harlech castle*, in *Merionethshire*, anciently called from her *Twr Bronwen*, (*Bronwen's tower\**), was sought and obtained in marriage by *Matholwch*, king of Ireland. Being afterwards ill-treated

\* *Twr Bronwen*, it appears was the most ancient name of this fortress. In after times it was called *Cae'r Collwyn*, from *Collwyn ab Tango*, one of the fifteen tribes of North Wales, and lord of *Evlonydd*, *Arduwy*, and part of *Llyn*. His grandchildren flourished in the time of *Griffith ab Cynan*. Accord-

by him, and insulted by a blow on the face, she left the country to return to her paternal home; but on landing in Wales we are told that she looked back upon Ireland, which freshening the memory of the indignity she had suffered, broke her heart. Brân, to avenge his sister, invaded Ireland, and destroyed an immense number of the people of that country. The historical romance also states that a square grave was made for Bronwen, on the banks of the river Alaw, and there she was buried. In 1813 a most interesting discovery was made, which serves to give great authenticity to our Welsh documents, as, in the present instance, the romance has evidently been founded on historical facts. A farmer living on the banks of the river Alaw, in Anglesea, having occasion for some stones, supplied himself from a *carnedd*, which was close to the river, and having removed several he came to a cist of close flags covered over, on removing the lid he found within an urn of ill-baked earth, about a foot high, placed with its mouth downwards, full of ashes, and half-calcined fragments of human bones. Another circumstance may be added, that the very spot has always been called Ynis Bronwen, or the islet of Bronwen, which is a remarkable confirmation of the genuineness of the discovery. All the circumstances together seem to place the matter beyond a doubt that the remains were actually those of Bronwen. Publicity was first given to this discovery by Sir Richard Hoare, who received the account from his friend Fenton the Pembrokeshire historian. The latter in his statement says, 'the report of this discovery soon went abroad, and came to the ears of the parson of the parish and another neighbouring clergyman, both fond of, and conversant with Welsh antiquities, who were immediately reminded of a passage in one of the early Welsh romances called the Mabinogion, the same that is quoted in Dr. Davies's 'Latin and Welsh Dictionary,' as well as in Richards's under the word *petrual* (square). 'Bedd petrual a wnaed i Fronwen ferch Llyr ar lan Alaw ac yno y claddwydd hi.' *A square grave was made for Bronwen the daughter of Lear, on the*

ing to Pennant he resided for some time in a square tower in the ancient fortress, the remains of which are very apparent; as are those of part of the old walls, which the more modern in certain places are seen to rest on.

*banks of the Alaw, and there she was buried."* "Happening to be in Anglesea soon after this discovery," says Fenton, "I could not resist the temptation of paying a visit to so memorable a spot, though separated from it by a distance of eighteen miles. I found it, in all local respects, exactly as described to me by the clergyman above mentioned, and as characterized by the cited passage from the romance. The tumulus raised over the venerable deposit was of considerable circuit, elegantly rounded, but low, about a dozen paces from the river Alaw. The urn (of which a sketch is given in the *Cambro Briton*, vol. II., p. 72) was preserved entire, with an exception of a small bit out of its lip, was ill-baked, very rude, and simple, having no other ornament than little pricked dots; in height from about a foot to fourteen inches." In conclusion he remarks, "never was there a more interesting discovery, as it greatly serves to give authenticity to our ancient British documents, even though they be introduced to minister to romance, as in the present instance, and fixes the probable date of the interment in question within a few years—a *desideratum* we despaired of being ever gratified with—a circumstance beautifully alluded to in the close of Mr. Bowles's 'Barrow Poem.'"

We have to add to the foregoing details, from our own information, that the urn of Bronwen with its contents, became by purchase the property of the late Richard Llwyd, author of "*Beaumaris Bay*." On visiting that patriotic poet, in the year 1829, we were favoured by him with a sight of that antique relic of buried ages, which minutely agreed with the account given by Fenton, even to "the little pricked dots," and the "small bit broken out of the lip." Mrs. Llwyd, our host's lady, we learnt, was quite ignorant of the antiquarian treasure of which her husband was possessed, nor did he ever enlighten her on that subject; as he felt convinced, he said, that the terror of a visit from the ghost of Bronwen would keep her sleepless ever after, or induce her to insist on the re-interment or removal of her remains. Before his death Mr. Llwyd presented the urn and its contents to the British Museum. He had previously stipulated with the authorities there, that a conspicuous and



appropriate place should be assigned to this ancient British relic, proportionate to its interest in the appreciation of the antiquary, and the Welsh patriot.

Highly as we estimate that grand national depository of all that is curious, interesting, and time-honoured, the British Museum, still we regret that Bronwen's urn was not restored to its original cairn—where, in its native and only appropriate place, it would have concentrated *all* consideration, instead of causing our contemplation to be distracted and divided between a million of interesting members of the past, the wonderful, or the remote. We contend that, without proportionably enriching the collections of the Museum, its removal has robbed the island of Anglesea, abounding as it does with glorious associations of historic and traditional lore, of one of its fairest objects of contemplative consideration. There, additionally honoured with a modern inscription, setting forth its claim to our contemplation, and a brief record of its recent discovery, it would have given a sort of classic reputation to the banks of the Alaw, invited the footsteps of thousands, and created an interest in the bosom of every enlightened visitor of her rural and antique shrine. There the embryo-poet might draw his earliest inspiration, and the far-travelled pilgrim of Welsh nationality might gaze with admiration on the long-enduring illustration of the union of truth and fiction in the Mabinogion, and the presumed verity of the historical Triads; the antiquity of which has been so frequently discussed, doubted, denied, but never disproved in the scrutinies of modern antiquarians.

Notwithstanding the removal of the urn, we would especially impress on, and most earnestly recommend to the attention of the inhabitants of that locality, the restoration of the grave of Bronwen, as near as possible to its original construction. Attached to the cairn, the liberality of a patriotic public might raise a monument, inscribed with a history of the whole affair, both in Welsh and English. A prize for the best inscription, in both languages, would be *well worthy the consideration* of the patrons of our *Cymreigyddions* and *Eisteddfods*, wherever held within the *principality of Wales*, or the metropolis of the British empire.

## PRINCE BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG'S FEMALE FAMILY,

INCLUDING HIS MOTHER, THREE SUCCESSIVE WIVES, AND  
TWENTY-SIX DAUGHTERS.

BRYCHAN Brecheiniog became the patriarch of a mighty tribe in Wales, of far-spreading branches and deeply-fixed roots; inasmuch that many of the most respectable families of the present day inhabiting the region that originally owned his sway, as well as some others in various parts of the principality, date their best authenticated pedigrees from him, as their fountain head. Therefore it becomes as necessary as desirable, to give as clear an account of him and his progeny as the evidences which time has left us will permit; although those scanty records may occasionally be found interwoven with legendary fable.

At the period preceding the birth of Brychan, a prince named Tewdrig ruled the district then called Garthmadrin,\* now known as the county of Brecon, or Brecknock; he was the contemporary of the Roman emperor Valentinian I. We now arrive at the epoch that marked the existence of

### MARCHEL, PRINCE BRYCHAN'S MOTHER.

Prince Tewdrig had an only daughter, whom he tenderly loved, named Marchel, or Marcella. At the period when this young princess arrived at the age of womanhood a dangerous pestilence visited and prevailed in the country. Her anxious father, fearing for the life of his only child and heiress to his dominions, determined on removing her from the scene of peril, resolved to send her on a friendly visit to the court of Cormac Mac Eubre,† king of the Brigantes, or

\* *Garthmadrin* signifies "fox-hold," from the abundance of that species of vermin, which in the sylvan ages made its home there.

† By some writers this prince has been called Cormac Mac Carbery.



Britons of Dublin.\* Previously, according to an ancient legend in the Cottonian library,† he addressed her in the following words:—"I am very uneasy lest your health should suffer from this pestilential disorder which at present ravages our country." (Now Marchel had a girdle made of a certain skin, to which popular opinion attributed such virtue, that whoever girded their loins with it would be safe from any pestilential infection; therefore, personally, she entertained no fears of an attack from the disorder; however she listened to her father, who continued his address to her.)—"Go, therefore, my daughter, to Ireland, and God grant that you may arrive there in safety."

According to the same legend, "Tewdrig king of Garthmadrin, with his captains, elders, and all his family, removed to Bryncoyn, near Llanmaes;‡ he then appointed an honourable and appropriate escort, to attend her to her destination."

However we may be inclined to smile at the primitive simplicity and minuteness of the details given in this ancient document, with its quaint phraseology, fashioned after the style of the scriptures, which doubtless betrays the hand of a monkish scribe, these characteristics are certainly very curious and interesting, notwithstanding that our imagination may occasionally be put to the utmost stretch in ascertaining the meaning of some portions of them. We are next informed that king Tewdrig appointed three hundred men and twelve honourable maids to attend his daughter on her journey; which, according to the following account was very disastrous:—"On the first night they reached Llansemin,§ where one hundred of her attendants died from the excessive rigour of the cold. On the morrow,

\* Or rather, as Theophilus Jones, the Breconshire historian, suggests, that part of Ireland now known as Wexford.

† Inserted in the "History of the Town and County of Brecknock," from whence we quote it.

‡ Llanmaes, or Llanvaes, signifies "church in the field." Surmising the locality of *Bryncoyn*, Theophilus Jones observes, "there is a field near Llanvaes (the western suburbs of the town of Brecon), being part of Newton farm, which is called *Bryn-gwyn*; (white hill,) on this field were formerly heaps of stones and vestiges of buildings." As *Bryn-gwyn* may be a corruption of *Bryn-coyn*, possibly those crumbled buildings might mark the site of the mansion or palace of king Tewdrig.

§ Perhaps *Llansevin*, in *Llangadock*, Carmarthenshire.

anxious and alarmed at this melancholy event, she arose and proceeded on her journey, and arrived the same night at Madrum,\* where, as at the former place, she lost one hundred men. On the following morning she arose very early, and the third night brought them to Porthmawr;† from whence, with her surviving hundred men and maidens, she passed over to Ireland. Upon the news of her arrival, Aulach, the son of Cormac, the king of the country, met her with a princely train, and the cause of her coming being explained to him, he was so smitten with her beauty, and pleased with her high rank, that he fell in love with, and afterwards married her; making at the same time a solemn vow, that if she produced him a son, he would return with her to Britain.‡ Aulach then made honourable provision for her twelve maidens,§ giving each of them away in marriage. In process of time Marchel conceived and brought forth a son, whom his father named Brychan; and when Brychan had completed his second year, his parents took him to Britain, and they resided at Benni.|| He was then put under the care of an ancient man named Drychan. At four years of age he was brought to Garthmadrin, where Tewdrig, his grandfather, held his court, and in his seventh year Drychan said to Brychan, bring my cane to me; and Drychan was dim in his latter years, and while he lay waking, a boar came out of the woods, and stood on the banks of the river Yschir,¶ and there was a stag behind him in the river, and there was a fish under the belly of the stag, which portended that Brychan should be happy in plenty of wealth. Likewise there was a beech, which stood on the banks of the said river, wherein the bees made honey. And Drychan said to his foster son Brychan, behold this tree of bees and honey, I will give thee

\* Meldrim, Carmarthenshire.

† A haven near St. David, Pembrokeshire.

‡ The date of this marriage A. D. 382.

§ An ancient precedent and provident arrangement for the benefit of maids of honour on the marriage of their royal mistress; better still, if her bachelor attendants had been similarly considered and provided for.

|| Probably Abergavenny, twenty-four miles from Brecon. The Welsh name of that town is *Vennul*, pronounced *Vennee*.

¶ Known at present as the river Usk.

also full measure of gold and silver, and may the grace of God remain with thee here and hereafter."

Theophilus Jones remarks, "the plain English of this legend, as far as it can be made out is, that this princess and her countrymen, to avoid a famine or some contagious disorder, were driven into Ireland, where she married, and afterwards returned with her husband to her native land, when the scarcity was over, or the disorder had ceased." \*

Aulach, in the right of Marchel his wife, succeeded Tewdrig as sovereign of Garthmadrin; and on his death his son Brychan, surnamed Brecheiniog, became king of that country, and began his reign A.D. 400. Brychan changed the name of Garthmadrin to Brecheiniog, which, in Welsh, it retains to the present day; while in English the same name is modified into Brecon, and occasionally Brecknockshire.

As the mixture of legendary matter with real history, in this memoir of Marchel, may be unwisely objected to, we avail ourselves of the great historian Gibbon's observation; "that the ancient legends deserve some regard, as they are obliged to connect their fables with the real history of their own times;" and another author remarks, that in the grand collection of French historians, executed with a care and magnificence worthy of a great nation, the ancient lives of the saints are inserted under each century or division, as equal vouchers with the ancient historians.

Relieved from our wanderings in the uncertain labyrinths of tradition by a faint perception of the lightly trodden paths through the wilderness of primitive history, we shall now endeavour to pursue the foot-prints of Brychan Brecheiniog, wherever they are traceable, from his boyhood onward.

\* Theophilus Jones says—"the arms given by the British herald to Marchel were, *or*, three bats, or (as they call them, *rere-mice*) azure-beaked and clawed gules: perhaps these ill-boding harbingers of darkness were adopted in commemoration of the gloomy pestilence which then raged in the country; and their beaks and claws were represented red, to denote the bloody characters which marked its track. These arms, quarterly, second, and third with those of Brychan, viz., sable, a fess, *or*, between two swords, in pale, points up and down, argent, pommel and hilted of the second, are now those of the county of Brecon; they are borne by the Gwynnes of Glanbrân, in Carmarthenshire, and Garth and Buckland in Brecknockshire; as well as by several other descendants of Aulach and Marchel, the parents of Brychan Brecheiniog.



He is said, in his youth, to have addicted himself to martial exercises, in which it is probable he became a proficient, although we have no record that he ever distinguished himself in arms. Notwithstanding the exceedingly pious character which he acquired in after time, it is evident his early days were marked by very dissolute proceedings.

It appears that about the period when Brychan was emerging from youth to manhood, a treaty of some description, perhaps on a point of territorial integrity, took place between Aulach, the father of Brychan, and Bedanell, or Benlli-gawr king of Deyrnllwg or Powys; when, in security for his faithfulness, the former gave his son as a hostage to the said king.

#### BRYCHAN'S ILLEGITIMATE SON CYNOG.\*

While residing at the court of this rival-prince of his father's in that perilous character, held sacred in primitive times, while marked by innocence and truth, but punishable with death, on the discovery of treachery on the part of either the hostage or his principal, Brychan became guilty of an offence, by which his life might have been forfeited to the violated laws. He seduced the daughter of Bedanell, by whom he had a male child, whom he named Cynog, in after times the most celebrated for sanctity of all his numerous sons.

In the first instance it may appear strange in a person so renowned in aftertime as Brychan, for his patronage of christianity, and every thing which assimilated with sanctity, that there is no evidence either of his having made, or offered reparation to the daughter of the king of Powys, by espousing her in the bands of wedlock. It is equally strange that in an age so rude, barbarous, vindictive, and self-avenging, we hear of no revengeful proceedings either from the parent or kindred of the injured party. However, both these omissions may be accounted for by the following contemporaneous history :—

“It appears that Bedanell, or Benlli-gawr, was a man of the most morose and brutal character, who evinced his ani-

\* Pronounced Kunnog.

"brought to the tents, and there baptized by the name of Cynog."

On this occasion Brychan is represented to have taken from his own arm, and placed on that of his infant son, a certain bracelet, of supposed magic power, probably an heirloom gift from his pagan parents, and in those simple times not considered repugnant to a profession of christianity. An ancient legend states, "this Cynog is famous in his native country, and the bracelet *is still preserved* as a curious relic." While treating of Cynog, Cressy, the Roman church historian states, "to him refers that which Giraldus reporteth of the wreath of saint Canawg\* (so he calls him), that the inhabitants of the county esteem to be a precious relic of wonderful virtue; insomuch, that if any one is to give testimony, when that wreath is placed in sight, he dare not commit perjury."†

According to the manuscript of Thomas Truman of Pantllwyd, in Llansannor, Glamorganshire, quoted by Theophilus Jones, and other authorities, Cynog, the eldest son of Brychan, was murdered by a party of pagan Saxons upon a mountain called the Van, situated between Bualt and Brecon; and from that circumstance the parish took and retains the name of Merthyr Cynog or Cunnog the martyr. In the Romish calendar he is recorded as a saint of great celebrity; and Cressy says the fame of his sanctity was most eminent among the Silures. His name is celebrated among our English martyrology, on the 11th of February, where he flourished "in all virtues" about the year of Christ 492.

\* This ancient relic we find occasionally called a bracelet, a wreath, and a collar. Giraldus Cambrensis describes it thus:—"I must not be silent concerning a collar chain, which they call St. Canawg's; for it is most like to gold in weight, nature, and colour. It is in four pieces, wrought round, joined together artificially, and cleft as it were in the middle with a dog's head, the teeth standing outward. It bears the marks of some severe blows, as if made with an iron hammer: for a certain man, as it is said, endeavouring to break the collar for the sake of the gold, experienced the divine vengeance, was deprived of his eye-sight, and lingered the remainder of his days in darkness." Bonedd y Saint, Rees's Welsh Saints, Jones's Brecknockshire, Hoare's Giraldus, Williams's Cambrian Biography.

† Theophilus Jones observes on these statements—"when this author wrote we do not know, but unfortunately *we do know* that the relic has been long, I fear irrecoverably lost; as, without asserting that mankind are more wicked than they were in the year 492, I may venture to affirm that, in proportion as population has increased, and oaths have multiplied, it would be ten thousand times more useful in 1805 than it was in the days of Cynog."

## BRYCHAN'S THREE WIVES AND PROGENY.

Brychan was thrice married. Theophilus Jones quarrels with the names of his three successive partners, and describes them truly as most unintelligible and uncouth, even to a Welshman, whose powers of swallowing consonants are supposed to be equal to an ostrich in devouring and digesting iron. The antiquary George Owen Harry calls them Eurbrost, Ambrost, and Pharwystry; other authors will have them to be Eurbrawst, Rhybrawst, and Peresgri; by no means an improvement upon the former, nor indeed can any thing be said in favour of their euphonious sound, in either version.

Brychan became as famous for his progeny as king Priam, as by those three wives, and another woman or two, he had no less than fifty children, twenty-four of them were sons, and twenty-six daughters. The number would be still more extensive if we can suppose that some of the names rejected, and substituted by others, were in reality what should be considered as additions to the list. But even while limiting the number to fifty, professor Rees and other late writers suggest the probability that some of his grandchildren are included in the account. What grounds these authors have for their doubts we have never learnt, therefore must confess we have met with no reason for shaking our faith in the number of children originally attributed to Brychan; especially as we have modern instances of certain vigorous old Welshmen of the north who gave the world a similar patriarchal issue.\*

\* This refers in the first instance to William ab Howell ab Iorwerth, the patriarch of Tregalan, mentioned by Pennant, who died in the year 1580, at the age of one hundred and five. He had by his first wife twenty-two children, by his second ten, by his third four, and by his two concubines seven, in all forty-three. His eldest son was eighty-three at the time of the father's death, and the youngest son only two years and-a-half old; so that between his first child and last, there was an interval of eighty-two years; nor did there less than three hundred people descend from this stock. To the above may be added the following instance of longevity and paternity of a numerous race, which, in several points, appears strangely coincidental:—Writing of the valley of Ffestiniog, Merionethshire, in the year 1756, lord Lyttleton states—"not long ago there died in that neighbourhood an honest Welsh farmer who was one hundred and five years of age. By his first wife he had thirty children; by his second four; and by his third and two concubines seven. His youngest son was eighty-one years younger than his eldest, and eight hundred persons descended from his body attended his funeral." Thus it appears he exceeded



In tracing the character of Brychan Brecheiniog, it would appear that after his conversion to christianity and his reception of baptism, that he afterwards relapsed into profligacy. The offences with which his life has been charged are incontinence and faithlessness to the marriage vow; as, besides his first son Cynog, no less than three of his children were illegitimate. It is certain, however, that a thorough reformation marked the after course of his life. Notwithstanding the fault of character here referred to, it is evident that Brychan was a man who revered virtue, and was free from the general vices of his time. This is proved by the care which he took of having his children educated and imbued in christian principles. The tender solicitude and laudable zeal which he evinced on this occasion were not without their fruit, as both his children and grandchildren, male and female, became famous for religious learning and practical piety—which enabled them to instruct, in the christian faith and practice, the converts which they and others similarly disposed made from barbarian paganism. The most eminent theologian in Britain at this time was Dubricius (afterwards known as the celebrated archbishop of Caerleon), whose collegiate establishment at Gwenddwr,\* on the banks of the Wye, drew forth the pious from all quarters, and acquired great celebrity from his ministry and teaching—as was strikingly proved by the capable scholars which issued from this seminary to doctrinate and civilize the land in after times. It is said that the first disciples or scholars of Dubricius were some of the children and grandchildren of Brychan. It is conjectured by Hughes† that Brychan himself was also one of the converts of this early father of the British church, “as the christian religion had not been introduced into Ireland at

Brychan Brecheiniog in the number of his children by one. Another instance appears in the case of William Parry, LL.D., who was executed, in 1584, for plotting with the Papists against Queen Elizabeth. While waiting for the final blow that was to launch him into eternity, he boasted among other claims to honorable notice, that his father had thirty children by two wives, and died at the age of one hundred and eight.

\* Gwenddwr is now known only as a parish and village of Breckonsshire. The village stands on high ground, about a mile from another village beneath it called Erwood, on the road between the towns of Builth and Hay, seven miles from the former.

† John Hughes author of *Hore Britannice*, the best history of the early British church and primitive British christianity extant.

the period when he came over to Britain." According to this account Dean Swift's celebrated vaunt on the early civilization of Ireland,

"This happy island Pallas called her own,  
When haughty Britain was an isle unknown,"

applies only to the profane knowledge which existed previous to the introduction of christianity, the priority of which is thence ceded to Britain.

Hughes suggests of Brychan, "he might have been a profligate character in his youth, and was perhaps converted (for the second time) in his old age by Dubricius." This conjecture receives some countenance from the inferior degree of pious celebrity attached to his name compared to what fell to the lot of some of his children, as champions of christianity, who are chronicled as martyrs and patron saints. Brychan, however, stands recorded in the annals of his country as an illustrious patriarch of a far-extending tribe, being as before observed, the father of fifty children; twenty-four sons and twenty-six daughters. His family is styled in the Triads "one of the three holy families of the isle of Britain," with those of Brán ab Llyr and Cunedda Wledig, in consequence of "having brought up his children in learning and the liberal arts, that they might be able to show their faith in Christ to the nation of the Cymry, wherever they were without faith." Hughes remarks, "learning was evidently a rare acquirement in those days when the children of princes esteemed it so great an ornament: and it shows the docility of many great men in that rugged age, that they were induced to take so decided a part in supporting the interests of christianity."

According to Bonedd y Saint the names of Brychan's twenty-four sons were, Cynog, Cledwyn, Dingad, Arthen, Cyvlevyr, Rhain, Dyvnan, Gerwyn, Cadog, Mathairn, Pasgen, Nefai, Pabiali, Llechan, Cynbryd, Cynvran, Hychan, Dyvrig, Cynin, Dogvan, Rhawin, Rhun, Cledog, and Caian. The names of the daughters will be found in the next division of this memoir. Nearly all these embraced a religious life, and were the founders of numerous churches in Wales as may be seen on consulting Rees's "Welsh Saints."

## BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG'S DAUGHTERS.

The principal genealogists, chroniclers, antiquaries, and historians who have supplied lists of the children of Brychan are, Llewelyn Offeiriad,\* Edward Llwyd, Hugh Thomas,† George Owen Harry,‡ John Jones of Devynnock, Leland, and Carte. Scarcely two of these perfectly agree as to the correctness of the names either of the sons or daughters of this British patriarch. According to Theophilus Jones the names of thirty-four, copied from a Welsh manuscript of Llewelyn Offeiriad by Edward Llwyd, were sent by him to Hugh Thomas. Thomas informed Llwyd, as appears by a letter of his, still preserved among his papers in the British Museum, that he had also a list copied from a manuscript of John Jones of Devynnock. George Owen Harry gives another; Leland another, from the life of St. Nectanus; and the Myvyrian Archæology another; all differing as to some of their names.

The children of Brychan, as before observed, were fifty in number; twenty-four sons and twenty-six daughters. The names of the former have been given in our notice of their father; according to Bonedd y Saint the names of the daughters were—first Gwladys, second Arianwen, third Tangwystl, fourth Mechel, fifth Nevyn, sixth Gwawr, seventh Gwrgon, eighth Eleri, ninth Lleian, tenth Nevydd, eleventh Rheingar, twelfth Golenddydd, thirteenth Gwenddydd, fourteenth Tydian, fifteenth Elined, sixteenth Ceindrych, seventeenth Gwen, eighteenth Cenedlon, nineteenth Cymorth, twentieth Clydai, twenty-first Dwynwen, twenty-second Ceinwen, twenty-third Envail, twenty-fourth Tydvil, twenty-fifth Hawystyl, and twenty-sixth Tybian.

The other names allowed to Brychan's daughters by some parties, and rejected by others, are second Wrgan, third Marchel or Marcella, fourth Gwtlith, fifth Drwynwen, sixth

\* Llewelyn Offeiriad (Llewelyn the priest), was the second son of Grifflth ab Owain ab Bledri ab Owain Brogyntyn, a chieftain of Powys. His works are still preserved at Jesus' College Oxford; the MS. bears the title of *Llyvr Llewelyn Offeiriad*, "the book of Llewelyn the priest." He was a learned herald, bard, and antiquary.

† Hugh Thomas was a deputy herald to Sir Henry St. George, Garter principal King at Arms in the year 1703.

‡ George Owen Harry was rector of Whitechurch, Cemeys, Pembrokeshire, and flourished as a herald in the reign of James I.



Cyngar, seventh Rhynhyder, eighth Melari or Eleri, tenth Gwtvil, eleventh Gwenvrewi, twelfth Eitech, sixteenth Gwenllian, seventeenth Feli, eighteenth Tibie, nineteenth Emmrhaith, twentieth Rhymeiden, twenty-first Cledy, twenty-third Almedha the martyr.

Several of those particularized in both the above series of names are noticed elsewhere in this work, and the subjects of brief biographical notices. But the following are so little known to history, that we may dismiss them at once with the slight records appended which the lenient wing of Time has been too merciful to expunge.

Arianwen, or Wrgen, each said to be the second daughter of Brychan, we are informed, was married to Iorworth Hirvlawdd (Edward the tall and active), a chieftain of Powys. She became the mother of Caenog-mawr, to whom was dedicated the church of Clog-canog in Denbigshire. Iorworth was descended from Beli-mawr, who was also the ancestor of Elystan Glodrydd, prince of Ferregs, and of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, lord of Glamorgan. Marchel or Marcella, was married to Hirvadrweh, or white bushy-longbeard, a personage of whom we have no genealogical account. Nevyn became the wife of Gynvarch Oer, and the mother of the celebrated Urien Rheged. Gwtlith is said to have lived in obscurity at Llysronwy, in Glamorganshire. Of Cyngar and Rhynhyder we have no account. Eleri or Melari, was the mother of Dewi, or St. David; according to Cressy, who says that Melari was another name for Non or Nona or Nonnitta. She is said to have been one of the most distinguished female saints of the ancient British church. There is a church dedicated to her in Gwyr, and another at Cydweli (Kidwelly), Carmarthenshire. Nevydd became the wife of a chieftain named Tudwall Bevyr, and had a church dedicated to her at a place called Llech Gelyddon, in Scotland. Of Eitech we know nothing further than that she resided at Towyn in Merionethshire. Goleuddydd was married to a chieftain named Tutwawl Bybyr, or Tutwawl the valiant, a prince, according to Llwyd, of some territory in Scotland. Llian was married to Gavran, and became the mother of a son stigmatized in the annals of his country as Aeddan Vradawg, or the traitor; the only instance in this illus-

trious and exemplary family of an unworthy descendant." "Aeddan became a prince of the northern Britons in the latter part of the fifth century. He deserted the cause of his countrymen, and traitorously fought with the Saxons against Rhydderch Hael, king of the Strathclyde Britons. For this enormous crime he was handed down to posterity branded with infamy, in company with Gwrgi and Medrod, who together form a Triad as the three arrant traitors of the isle of Britain, who were the cause of the Britons losing the sovereignty of the island."\* Of Felli, Tybie, Emrhaith, and Rhyneiden, we have no account or tradition, except that Tybie was buried in Carmarthenshire at a place called from her Llanybie, or Llandebie, and Rhyneiden at Cydweli (Kidwelly), in the same county. Cledy lived at Emlyn, in Carmarthenshire, where a church was said to have been dedicated to her called Cleyden, or Clyday.

Doubtless most of these names will appear as coarse, unintelligible, and unpronounceable to an English reader as so many German or Russian designations; but as the supposed repulsiveness or non-appreciation can proceed only from ignorance of the meaning of them, we shall endeavour to show that what is unintelligible, is not necessarily unreasonable; and that much inward beauty attaches to what apparently possess ungainly exteriors.

A Welshman cannot fail to notice in these Celtic proper names an elegance and sense of refinement, full of poetic beauty, little to have been expected in so early an epoch as the fifth or sixth century. The first daughter's name is Gwladys, pronounced Gladdis; punning Englishmen will sometimes have it glad-eyes, thus furnishing an agreeable etymon of their own. Inoffensive at least to the most fastidiously musical Italian ear. The Latin version of it is Claudia. Gwawr (Latinized Julia), is the Welsh of the rosy-finger Aurora, or the dawn of day. Arianwen, signifies silver-white, and carries its own eulogy. Gwron, is heroic; in what sense it could be an appropriate name for an infant girl is not easily conceivable. Perhaps she sported

\* See Williams's Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen, p. 11. Triads 46, 52, Myvyrian Archaeology, p. 11, 65.

smiles instead of cries at the baptismal test of cold water; and for her baby courage won her honorary designation. Goleuddydd, is the light of day; and Gwenddydd, clear or fair day—one of the most rare, far-spreading, and universal of the good things with which the creator has blest our moist and cloudy clime.\* Gwên, is a smile; or if the name should be Gwen, it simply signifies *white*, or fair; and Ceinwen, means comely-fair, or fairly beautiful. Some names we pass over, of meanings too obscure for comment; but Tanglwstl, the third daughter of Brychan, we have reserved for especial notice, with which we shall close our observations on this fair and exemplary sisterhood. Truly this name Tanglwstl, with its tough-looking consonants and somewhat strange sound, is alarming enough to the eye, ear, and tongue of the Saxon—although Tanglwstl is not very difficult to utter. But when he is informed that it carries the meaning of “a pledge of peace,” or “hostage of tranquility,” as the name of a little girl, surely it may be allowed to pass uncensured, especially if we may be allowed to suppose that this *pledge of peace* came very seasonably to calm some family feuds between the lady Brychan and her lord, originating in certain discoveries connected with his notorious *gallivantings*; four of his children having other mothers than either of the three ladies of inharmonious names whom our famed worthy had espoused.

#### THE TIMES OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG.

The public events which agitated these early times were neither weak nor despicable in relation to the race affected by them, but such as were calculated to draw forth the energies and self-preserving instincts of a people that, though but recently emerged from rank barbarism, were ever on the move (certainly not yet amounting to a march) towards civilization. These all-engrossing subjects of human thought and action appear to have been two-fold: how to repel the incursions of their enemies, and how to think, on that perplexing question in the church, whether the inno-

\* Gwenddydd, is literally *white-day*; implying the white silvery clouds contrasting with the blue-ether of a fine summer's day.



vating opinions of Palagius were true or false, and to choose their parties accordingly.

The public enemies of the Britons in these times were certain large bands of freebooters, or armed barbarians, who prowled through the country in great strength, and terrified every well-disposed and settled community. These ruthless savages, it appears, would at times conceal themselves in the depths of solitary ravines, and in the wild sylvan forests, nearest to the settlements which they had resolved to attack, and in the night issue forth like wolves on the slumbering fold, or fiends in human flesh, on their mission of plunder and murder. They also, according to the description of country which they traversed, would at times wend along the tops and sides of hills and mountains, from the most northern to the extreme southern ends of the island, on these marauding expeditions. From such "vantage ground" they were enabled to look down into every plain, vale, or dingle, where human habitations appeared, and attracted their cupidity on their far-extending march of villany from sea to sea. Thence bursting downwards in swarming numbers on secluded neighbourhoods, it is probable that accumulation of property by robbery was their main and perhaps only original object, and that murder and utter annihilation of their opponents was the consequence of resistance. It is certain they were often successfully opposed, mastered, and subjected to as little mercy as they were in the habit of dealing to others, except the few who were fortunate enough to save themselves by flight from the scene of slaughter; as we shall have occasion to show in the course of these memoirs.

It would be paying these loathsome barbarians too high a compliment to imagine (as it has often been stated) that their animosity was more pointedly directed towards those who held the doctrines of christianity than other natives of the island, on account of hatred of doctrines or opinions opposed to their own. It were a rueful and sorry jest to speculate on the probable opinions held by professed robbers and murderers by occupation. Living in clustered communities of dwellings, accumulating cattle, tilling the land, erecting churches, religious houses, and what have been

denominated colleges, were peculiarities that distinguished the early British christians; and these being also signs of the possession of property, became allurements to their invaders. As they were the most industrious in the island, it follows that they became the most affluent: doubtless, the only cause for being selected as peculiar marks for despoilment and destruction. Three of the children of Brychan are recorded to have become the victims of these ferocious people; Cynog, his eldest son; Almedha, his twenty-third, and Tydvil his twenty-fourth daughter. The particulars of the murder, or martyrdom (as it has been called, from their occupying at the time certain offices in the church) of the two former, are not upon record. But the dreadful massacre of Tydvil and her travelling party is related in her memoir, where the death of the venerable Brychan himself, with several members of his family, has also met the fullest statement.

These murderers of many an exemplary and peaceful population have usually and very correctly been described as pagan "Gwyddel," or Irish, Picts, and Saxons; and it has been objected by other writers that the latter people had not yet become inhabitants of this island: concluding, therefore, that the account which included them in these dark transactions must consequently be inaccurate. It is known, however, and among others we have the authority of the learned archbishop Usher for the statement, that long before the Saxons appeared in the characters of national invaders and conquerors, they had frequented Britian as pirates; and settling for a time on the coasts, occasionally issued from thence into the interior on these *chivalrous* expeditions.

The incursions of these miscreants called forth the energies and conduct of the young and old among the Britons to oppose and repel them—in which gallant undertakings they were greatly assisted by the Roman legions, who, doubtless, admired and honoured the patriotism of the brave islanders, over whom it was their glory to preside, for their vigorous manliness in wars so justifiable in the eye of virtue and even piety. The author of "*Horæ Britannicæ*" quotes Ammianus Marcellinus as his authority to prove that the Romans found

it necessary in latter times to institute a new officer for the express purpose of watching the motions and marching his forces against these barbarians, "a comes litteris Saxonici per Britannias."

The secondary subject of public agitation, as before observed, was that most striking feature in these times, called in church history the *Palagian Heresy*. It originated in the promulgation of certain new scriptural opinions put forth by a British ecclesiastic of the most bold and decisive character, however erroneous he may have been in his conclusions.

The founder of this new sect of religionists, whose heresies are said to have disturbed the peace of the church for the space of two hundred years, was a Briton named Morgan, evidently a man of strong intellect, and it appears full of the ambition of becoming the founder of a new sect in the christian church, and a reformer of ancient errors. With the view of spreading his doctrines far beyond the limits of his native island, he caused his name to be translated into Greek, whence he became generally known on the continent of Europe by the designation of Palagins, and his doctrines stigmatized by his opponents as the Palagian heresy.

Without entering into the question of the truths or falsehoods, the degree of verity or amount of error in this man's innovating opinions, we consider the mere circumstance of his starting a new theory in so early an age, a proud and elevating evidence of intellectual originality and reasoning powers in an ancient Briton of the fifth century: ought we not, therefore, to be proud that such a man as Morgan or Palagius had his being amongst us? The amount of merit that should be conceded to him, is that he was the first who taught the people the art of thinking for themselves on theological matters, and incited them to examine and test the precepts of their teachers; thus laying the foundation of the right of private judgment, in opposition to the assumptions of dogmatic and dominant religious professors. It has been well remarked by Carlyle, that all dominant religionists of later times have echoed each other in vivifying Palagius as an arch heretic, a piece of dogmatic insolence, worthy only of the persecuting intolerance of the Roman priesthood.



That his opinions spread abroad, and were embraced (whether for good or evil) by thousands and tens of thousands, affords a proof that the reasoning powers of our islanders were awakened, and that they were no longer content to yield a blind obedience amounting to a surrender of their mental functions to any one set of men. That they had become, in a certain degree, a thinking people, and mentally energetic in entertaining the question which agitated society, is very manifest from the earnestness and vehement ardour with which each party supported or opposed their respective views in the Palagian controversy, now raging throughout the most populated portions of the island. The opponents of Palagianism, among the most strenuous of whom were Brychan Brecheiniog and his family, became greatly alarmed at the continual growth of converts to the new opinions, and in their zeal made application to the ruling powers of the christian church in Gaul for assistance to oppose the evil. The orthodox party in the Gallic church, who were also bearded with Palagian opposition on their own ground, gave immediate attention to their request, and sent over the two eminent bishops, St. German and Lupus.

It is due to the memory of the primitive ecclesiastics of Britain in these times to show with what a spirit of liberality they met this innovation or heresy of Palagius. They did not pretend to evince their love of the God of truth and mercy by burning alive or butchering with the sword the author of these new opinions, or even by burning or destroying his writings; but most wisely they put to work the machine of human intellect instead of that of the merciless Inquisition. It is to the permanent honour, the everlasting glory of these early British christians, that no other force or coercive aid was resorted to, or thought of by either party, than those of the reasoning and persuasive powers of man, to elicit and support what they respectively considered the truth. The voice of the preacher, not the brand of the warrior, was the only approved weapon in this war of opinion. It was reserved for the refinement of later ages to bring forth fire and sword as the elements of conviction in the settlement of a controversy on points of *disagreement in the christian church*. They were no

"Fire-eyed disputants, who deemed their swords  
On points of faith more eloquent than words,"\*

Appealing to the reasoning capacities of their hearers, they not merely denied, but *disproved* the assumptions and conclusions of their adversary, to the satisfaction and conviction of thousands. This was noble, this was honourable and generous dealing; none were compelled to repudiate the opinions they had perhaps too hastily adopted; but on a thorough conviction of their unsoundness, by the arguments of the patient and discerning preacher, their abjuration became a voluntary concession.

Church history informs us that by the persuasive eloquence and perseverance of the two continental bishops, aided by the zeal of the British ecclesiastics, the Palagian heresy was at length suppressed. But that in the course of time it was revived, and embraced by the succeeding followers of Palagius with amazing energy, and supported by the most tenacious zeal of that party. That notwithstanding the argumentative opposition which it met with, it continued to disturb the tranquility of the church till towards the conclusion of the next age; when it was finally put down and extinguished for ever by the transcendent eloquence of David the Monk, known to posterity as St. David, the patron saint of the ancient Britons.

We shall conclude this memoir of the family and times of Brychan Brecheiniog with the following detail of one of the most memorable and characteristic of occurrences in that early era of British history:—There is a place in Flintshire, north Wales, that bears the name of Maes Garmon,† or St. German's field. It is situated about a mile west of the town of Mold, on the side of the river Alyn, and gained that significant appellation from an eventful occurrence of these times called the "Halleluiah Victory." The particulars are thus related by Pennant. "Visited Maes Garmon, a spot that still retains the name of the saintly commander in the celebrated battle the *Victoria Alleluatica*, fought in 420 between the Britons, headed by the bishops Germanus and Lupus, and a crowd of pagan

\* Moore's Veiled Prophet of Khorassan.

† Garmon is the Welsh of St. German, or Germanus.

Picts and Saxons, who were carrying desolation through the country. This event happened in Easter week, when the christian army, wet with their recent baptism in the river Alyn, were led by their holy commanders against the pagan host. Germanus instructed them to attend to the word he gave, and repeat it. Accordingly, he pronounced that of *Alleluia*. His soldiers caught and repeated the sacred sound with such ecstatic force that, the hills re-echoing with the cry, struck terror into the enemy who fled on all sides; numbers perished by the sword, and numbers in the adjacent river." Pennan adds, "such is the relation given by Constantius of Lyons, who wrote the life of Germanus within thirty-two years after the death of the saint."

The traditions of the country, though somewhat wilder, differ slightly from Pennant's version of the affair of Maes Garmon; and, we may add, are more graphic and descriptive of the occurrence. When we visited that spot in the year 1829, the following was the relation which we received from a person well versed in the traditions of the neighbourhood:—While the bishops, St. German and Lupus, were busily engaged in the ceremony of baptizing an immense multitude in the river Alyn, they were suddenly surprised by a host of barbarians, who made their appearance in the gap, or mountain pass, immediately above them, and with their usual murderous purpose, making a rapid descent upon them. The Britons being mostly unarmed, little expecting such intruders, might soon have become their victims, but for the singular presence of mind evinced by the venerable St. German, whose piety and great capacity in averting peril in its wildest hour, became strikingly apparent. He briefly addressed them, and checked their alarms, which would have led to their confusion and certain destruction, by an assurance of divine protection, provided they followed his instructions. He desired them to fall upon their knees in prayer, and remain so immovably, and in utter silence, till he gave a certain word on the approach of the foe, which they were to repeat, and rush upon them at the same instant. Accordingly when the barbarians, sword in hand, and thirsting for blood, attained the river's side, instead of dashing over the stream and commencing



the work of death, astonished at the solemn silence and inert appearance of the kneeling multitude, they made a pause and gazed in wonderment at a scene so new and mystical to them. While this feeling possessed the invaders St. German exclaimed aloud "Halleluia!"—the Britons all at once springing on their feet, in one grand chorus shouted out the sacred word till the neighbouring hills re-echoed with their multitudinous voices; the armed portion of the party rushed on the enemy at the same instant. Astounded and bewildered, the barbarians commenced a rapid and disorderly retreat, scampering up the hill and through the *bwlech*, or mountain gap, by which they so lately entered for the purposes of destruction and conquest. Many fell in the pursuit, both in the river and on the hill's side, the victims of a panic of very simple foundation. The catastrophe, according to the spirit of the times, was attributed by the British christians to the immediate interference of the deity in their favour; as, according to their conception, nothing short of a miracle could have preserved an unprepared assemblage against the powerful opposition of such an armed multitude.

It is pleasant to record the public spirit and good taste of a Welsh gentleman, Nehemiah Griffith, Esq., of Rhual, in this neighbourhood, which induced him to erect a column, with an appropriate inscription in Latin, commemorative of this event. It runs as follows:—

Ad Annum

cccxix.

Saxones Pictiq. Bellum adversus  
Britones junctis viribus susceperunt  
In hac regione, hodieq. Maesgarmon  
Appellata: cum in prælium descenditur,  
Apostolica Britonum Germano  
Et Lepo, Christus militabat in castris:  
Alleluia tertio' repetitum exclamabant;  
Hostile agmen terrore prosternitur;

Triumphant

Hostibus fusi sine sanguine;  
Palma fide non viribus obtenta

M. P.

In Victoria Alleluatica memoriam

N. G.

MDCCXXXVI.

## CATHERINE,

WIFE OF THE RENOWNED CHIEFTAIN IEVAN AB ROBERT OF  
CESELGYVARCH.

THE lady upon whose memoirs we are now engaged lived in a perilous and stirring age of violence and bloodshed, when energy of character, and the virtues of courage, and quickness of intellect, in meeting the danger of the hour, with corresponding vigour or stratagem, were most in request in the female as well as the male character. Consequently a jury of Fine Ladies of our times are scarcely competent to decide upon her claims to applause, or to give a just verdict of reprehension. Neither can the gentlemen of our times be fair judges of what constituted excellence of character in the females of those days, measuring their merits by the standard of their own fair contemporaries. But let the contemplative eye glance on the Greek and Turkish warfare of our times—and let a French or English lady of fashion put herself on a parallel with the wife of a Grecian chief whose camp is surprised in the night, and unless mightily self-flattered, she may soon discover her helplessness and inutility in such a sphere of perilous tumult. A discovery so humiliating, perhaps, may produce toleration for such a being as the lady under present consideration. In England this period was distinguished by the wars of the Roses between the rival houses of York and Lancaster; while in Wales (though many became partizans of either of those houses) they had a bye-play of murderous violence of their own to enact, which was marked by great depravity of manners, and an utter estrangement to good morals.

Catherine was of the ancient house of Bryn y Voel in Evioneth, North Wales. She was married to one of the bravest men of his country and time; and what may have flattered her woman's vanity the more, Ievan ab Robert\*

\* Iefan, or Ievan, has been frequently misprinted Jevan, from the inattention of authors in correcting their proof sheets. That name is now universally modernized into Evan.

was a very handsome man, indeed as it should seem, the most handsome of his contemporaries. Sir John Wynn of Gwydir says of him, "he was a goodly man of personage, of great stature (as may appeare by the Welsh songes made unto him), and most valiant with all. Besides the turmoyles abroad, he sustayned deadly feud (as the northern man termeth) at home, in his *doore*,\* a war more dangerous than the other."

Although very near relatives, there was a bitter feud between the husbands of Catherine, Ievan ab Robert, and his near kinsman, Howel ab Rhys. The intermarriages in these families seem as extraordinary as the rivalry and hatred between them; the wife of Ievan ab Robert being a sister to Howel ab Rhys, and the first wife of the latter a sister to Ievan ab Robert. The second wife of Howel ab Rhys was the daughter of Tudor ab Griffith; and as in all family feuds the ladies generally contrive to fulfil their parts to admiration, this woman certainly was no exception to that rule. Doctor Johnson has left it on record that he loved a good hater—in which case here is a woman after his own heart, who hated and hunted her enemies to the death, and became an ever-burning but unconsumable fire-brand for the destruction of peace both in her own family and her neighbour's. Sir John Wynn† describes her as "Tudor ab Griffith ab Eineon's daughter, of Ardydwy, a courageous stirring woman, who never gave over to make debate betweene her husband and his next neighbour and brother-in-law my ancestor. Many bickerings passed betweene them, either making as many friends as he could, and many men were slayne, but commonly the losse fell on Howel ab Rhys his side. This woman caused the parson of Llanvrothen to be murdered because he had fostered to my ancestor;‡ but God soe wrought that the murtherers,

\* A mode of expression that seems to explain itself.

† In our numerous quotations from this very picturesque old author, we purposely avoid either modernizing the language or altering the old English spelling—which would be about as barbarous a proceeding as dressing up the statue of an ancient hero in the trim attire of a modish dandy, or French dancing master.

‡ Sir John takes many opportunities of boasting his descent from Ievan ab Robert.



being three bretheren, were all slayne afterwards by my ancestor, in revenge of the parson's unworthie death." Referring to the cause of this "mortal hatred" between the two brothers-in-law, Sir John Wynn makes it appear that it originated in the preference manifested by Ievan ab Robert for his nephew John ab Meredith, who (as he expresses it) "affected him best," as he was also his fosterbrother, although nearly allied to the other—"which was taken soe heinously by Howel ab Rhys, that he converted the summe of his rancour upon his brother-in-law and next neighbour." It would seem also, that on the death of Howel ab Rhys's first wife (sister to Ievan ab Robert), that all ties between them were finally broken, and they shunned each other's company, while the malignant nature of his second wife poured oil upon their fire of discord. As the whole of this account is derived from that quaint piece of antiquity, the "Historie of the Gwydir Family, by Sir John Wynn," the first baronet of that name, we shall give as much as possible of these details in the venerable author's own phraseology.

"The beginning of the quarrell and unkindness between Ievan ab Robert and Howel ab Rhys grew in this sort. Ievan ab Robert, after his sister's death, upon some mislike left (abandoned) the company of Howel ab Rhys, and accompanied John ab Meredith his nephew and his children, who where at continuall hate with Howel ab Rhys. The fashion was, in those days, that the gentlemen and their retainers met commonly every day to shoote matches and masteries:\* there was noe gentleman of worth in the country but had a wine cellar of his owne, which wine was solde to his profit. Thither came his friends to meete him, and there spent the day in shooting, wrestling, throwing the sledge, and other acts of activitie; and drinking (very moderately withall) not according to the *healthing*† and gluttonous manner of our dayes.

\* To shoot at a target with bows and arrows, one party aiming at mastery in skill as a *good shot* over the other.

† Drinking healths. Drinking and gluttony being the vices of wealthy civilized times, would have ill accorded with the activity requisite for self-preservation in the lawless period here described.

"Howel ab Rhys did *draw a draught*\* upon Ievan ab Robert, and sent a brother of his, to lodge over nighte at Keselgyvarch, to understand which way Ievan ab Robert meante to go next daye, who was determined to shoote a matche with John ab Meredith's children, at Llanvihangel y Pennant,† not farre from John ab Meredith's house. This being understood, the spie, Howel ab Rhys's brother, slips away in the night, to his brother, and lets him know where he should lay for him.‡ Now had Howel ab Rhys provided a butcher for the purpose, that should have murdered him; for he had directions from Howel to keepe himself free, and not to undertake any of the company untill he saw them in a medley, and every man fighting. Then was this chardge [given to him], to come behind the tallest man in the company (for otherwise he knew him not, being a stranger), and to knocke him downe; for Howel ab Rhys sayd—'thou shalt soone discerne him from the rest by his stature, and he will make way before him. There is a fosterbrother of his, one Robin ab Inko, a little fellow, that useth to watch him behinde; take heede of him; for be the encountre never soe hot, his eye is ever on his fosterbrother.' "§

Catherine, the subject of our memoir, in the next passage makes her appearance; and a most vivid picture our ancient historian draws of this affectionate and energetic matron, in contrast with her sullen, dogged, determinedly murderous brother. Although she was uninformed of the intended murder, yet, having just parted with her husband, and on her return homeward meeting her brother, his deadly enemy,

\* *Draw a draught* is a phrase frequently used by this author, and imports arranging a stratagem; or as some of our old dramatists have phrased a similar idea, "hatched a plot."

† Llanvihangel y Pennant, St. Michael the archangel of the brook-head.

‡ Way-lay, to murder him.

§ This a powerful illustration of the affection between foster-brethren; and the love of the foster-parents towards the child whom they had nursed, was, if possible, greater still. To understand this long obsolete fostering system, it is to be observed, the custom was for an infant of the "great house" of the locality to be sent to a neighbouring farmer's, or some such person, to be nursed, or fostered, where it was brought up among their own children, and the *little stranger* became the pet of the whole family. The love between these foster-parents and their children towards the fostered child, thence took its deepest root; and was through life a binding tie of the dearest regard between the rich and poor of olden times in Wales, that is scarcely conceivable in our days.

riding with his emissaries at full speed after him and his company, as if in pursuit, her womanly loving nature intuitively discovered his peril; and in her terrible apprehensions she was stirred to the most heart-touching expostulations, which she made to avert the dreaded rencontre.

"Ievan ab Robert, accordinge as he was appointed, went that morning with his ordinary company towards Llanvihangel to meete John ab Meredith. You are to understand that in those dayes, and in that wilde worlde, every man stooode upon his garde, and went not abroad but in sorte and soe armed, as if he went to the field to encountre with his enemies. Howel ab Rhys's sister, being Ievan ab Robert's wife, went a mile, or thereabout, with her husband and the company, talking with them, and soe parted with them; and in her way homewards, she met her brother on horse-backe, with a grete companie of people armed, riding after her husbände as fast as they coulde. On this she cried out upon her brother, and desired him, for the love of God, not to harme her husbände, who meant him no harme; and withall steps to his horse, meaning to have caught him by the bridle, which he seeing, turned his horse about. She then caught the horse by the taile, hanging upon him soe long, and crying upon her brother, that in the end he drew out his short sword, and strucke at her arme. Which she perceiving, was faine to lett slippe her hold, and running before him to a narrow passage, whereby he must passe through a brooke where there was a footbridge neare the forde: she then steppes to the footbridge and takes away the *canllaw*,\* or handstay of the bridge, and with the same letts flie at her brother; and if he had not avoyded the blow, she had strucke him downe from his horse.—Furor arma ministrat."

The diabolical murder, cunningly as it was concerted, utterly failed of execution; but brought destruction on the wretched instrument employed to carry it into effect through the watchful affection of the fosterbrother of the intended victim. But we shall give the details in the words of our old Welsh historian.

\* The top rail of the side fence of a rustic bridge.



"Howel ab Rhys and his companie, withine a mile over-tooke Ievan ab Robert and his followers, who turned heade upon him, though greatlie overmatched. The bickering grew verie hott, and manie were knocked downe of either side. In the ende, when thatt shoulde be performed which they came for, the murthering butcher haveing not strucke one stroake all day, but watching opportunity, and finding the companie more scattered than at first from Ievan ab Robert, thrust himselfe among Ievan ab Robert's people behinde, and, makeing a blow at him, was prevented by Robin ab Inko, his fosterbrother, and knocked downe; God bringing upon his head the destruction that he meant for another: which Howel ab Rhys perceiving, cryed to his people, 'let us awaie and begone; I had given chardge that Robin ab Inko should have been better looked unto:' and soe that bickering brake with the hurte of manie, and the deathe of that one man."

Another instance of the savage depravity of these times is given in the next passage of Sir John Wynn's history, detailing the murder of the parson of Llanvrothen by the machinations of the ferocious wife of Howel ab Rhys, which was referred to in another part of this memoir.

"It fortun'd anon after, that the parson of Llanvrothen\* tooke a childe of Ievan ab Robert's to foster, which sore grieved Howel ab Rhys's wife, her husbände haveing then more lande in that parish than Ievan ab Robert; in revenge whereof she plotted the death of the said parson in this manner. She sente a woman to aske lodgeing of the parson, *who used not to deny any.*† The woman being in bed, after midnight, began to strike and to rave; whereupon the parson, thinking that she had been distracted, awakeing out

\* Llanvrothen is a small village in Merionethshire, situated near the Traeth-mawr sands.

† The diabolical nature of the woman may be conceived from this circumstance; the benevolent trait in the character of this hospitable Welsh parson became the snare that ensured his destruction. "*He used not to deny any;*" a simple but affectingly comprehensive expression, that forcibly reminds us of Goldsmith's *beau ideal* of a country parson.

"His house was known to all the vagrant train,  
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain."

*Deserted Village.*

of his sleep, and wondering at so suddaine a crie in the night, made towards her, and his household also; then she vowed with great vehemence, that he sought to take undue freedome with her, and soe gott out of doores, threatening revenge to the parson. This woman had her brethren, three notable rogues, of a vile crew, fit for any mischief, being followers of Howel ab Rhys. In a morning these brethren watched the parson, as he went to look to his cattle, in a place in that parish called Gogo yr Llechwin, being now a tenement of mine, and there murthered him. Two of them fled to Chirkeland, in Denbighshire, and some to the Trevors, who were friends or of a kinne to Howel ab Rhys or his wife. It was the manner in those dayes, that the murtherer onely, *he that gave the death-wound*, should flye, which was called in Welsh *Llawrudd*, which is, a red hande, because he had blouded his hande: the accessaries and abettors to the murtherers were never harkened (sought) after."

The following account of the apprehension and punishment of the "*Llawrudd*," or red-hands, is strikingly interesting. It describes a state of things once common to all the countries of Europe, and to Italy especially, in later times, when the powerful outlaw was in reality the despotic sovereign of his own locality. Supported by his own bands, the "*captaine of the country*," as Sir John Wynn calls the Welsh freebooter, he raised his contributions when and where he pleased, defended his most guilty friends against the law of the land, and the wrath of rival outlaws, and made war to the death on those whose possessions he coveted, or whose persons he disliked.

"In those dayes, in Chirkeland and Oswaldstreland,\* two sects, or kindred (clans), contended for the sovereignty of the countrie, and were at continuall strife one with another: the Kyffins and the Trevors. They had their alliance, partisans, and friends in all the countreys round thereabouts, to whome, as the manner of the time was, they sente such of their followers as committed murther or manslaughter,

\* Now called Oswestry; it adjoins Chirkeland, where the Trevors continue still to be a very considerable family.

which were safely kept as very precious jewells; and they received the like from their friendes. These kinde of people were stowed in the day time in chambers in their houses, and in the night they went to the next wine house that belonged to the gentleman, or to his tenants houses, not farre off, to make merry, or to wench. Meredith ab Howel ab Moris, in those dayes chiefe and leader of the sect of the Kyffins, was a kinne to Ievan ab Robert, and in league with him, to whome he sente to desire him to *draw a draught* to catch those murtherers; who sente him worde that he shoulde come privately into Chirkelande onely accompanied with but six, and he made noe doubt to deliver the murtherers into his handes. As Ievan ab Robert was in his way going thither, passing by Ty yn y Rhos,\* being a wine house, standing in Pendryn Deydraeth, Howel ab Rhys's wife being in the house said to the people that were with her, 'yonder goeth Ievan ab Robert,' *Hwyr y dial ev ei dadraeth*, which is as much as to say 'that he would not in haste be revenged of the wrong done to his foster.' Being come to Chirkelande he abode there manie dayes in secret and unseen, sleeping in the day, and watching all night. In the ende, with the helpe of his friendes, he caught the two murtherers, whome he had no sooner in hand but the crie did rise, *the Trevors to their friendes, and the Kyffins to their leaders*. To the latter of these cries Meredith ab Howel ab Moris resorted, who told Ievan ab Robert that it was impossible for him to carry them out of the country to any place to have judiciable proceedings against them, by reason that the faction of the Trevors woulde lay the way and narrow passages of the countrie, and if they were brought to Chirke castle gate to receive the triall of the countrie lawes, it was lawefull for the offender's friendes, whosoever they were, to bring five poundes for everie man for a fine to the lord, and to acquit them, soe it were nott in cases of treason. A damnable custome used in those dayes, in the lordship's marches, which was used alsoe in Mawddwy, untill the new ordinance of Wales, made in the seven and twentieth yeare of Henery VIII. Hereupon Ievan ab Robert

\* Ty yn y Rhos, i. e., house on the common.



commanded one of his men to strike off their heads, which the fellow doing faintlie, the offender tolde him that if he had his necke under his sworde, he would make it take better edge than he did: so resolute were they in those dayes and in contempt of death—whereupon Ievan ab Robert, in a rage stepping to them, stricke off their heads." Thus two out of the three murderers met their fate; and as we shall soon see, the third did not escape.

We have more, in the next passage, on the "goodlie personage" of Ievan ab Robert, the husband of our Catherine; he must have been almost gigantic in stature, and a fair match for his contemporary Sir Richard Herbert, the celebrated Yorkist commander, had it been their lot ever to meet in battle. The perseverance with which he followed up this adventure, sleeping in caves, or wherever he could conceal himself by day, and searching out the murderers by night, cost no trifling bodily fatigue and suffering, it would appear by the latter part of this passage.

"Davydd Llwyd ab Griffith Vychan, grandchild to Ievan ab Robert, in his youth waited upon Hugh, son to Mr. Robert ab Rhys, at Cambridge, elected Abbot of Conway by his father's procurement, in his minoritie. He being at Plas Iolon,\* at the house of Mr. Robert ab Rhys, an old woman that dwelt there tolde him that she had seene his grandfather Ievan ab Robert at that house, both in goeing and coming from his voyage into Chirkeland, and that he was the tallest and goodliest man that ever she had seene; for sitting at the fire upon the spûr,† the hinder parte of his heade was to be seene over the spûr, which she never saw to any other man. She also said, that in his returne from Chirkeland she saw Lowry, daughter of Howel, Rhys ab Meredith's wife, his kinswoman, wash his eyes with white wine, being bloudshot by long watching."

The destruction of the third and last of the murderers of the parson of Llanvrothen is next narrated; which event made Ievan ab Robert's expedition into Chirkeland, upon the

\* Plas Iolyn is in Denbighshire, not far from Gelar and Voellâs: it belongs to the Middletons of Chirke castle.

† Pronounced spear; the high-backed oaken settle once common to the better sort of farm-houses.

whole, a very complete adventure, unique in its details, and unsurpassed for its ultimate poetic justice, by the most elaborate of our tales of fiction.

"Ievan ab Robert, in his returne from Chirkeland, riding home to his house by Gallt y Morva-hir,\* by moonshine (the tide in Traeth-mawr giveing him noe sooner passage, talking with his men carelessly, and out of danger as he imagined), suddainlie lighted an arrowe shot amongst them from the hill side, which was then full of wood. On this they made a stande, and shot wholly, all seven, towards the place from whence the other arrowe came, with one of which arrowes of theirs, shot soe at random, they killed him that shot at them—being the third brother of the murtherers."

This triumphant achievement of Ievan ab Robert's, in the destruction of these pestilent wretches, as might be expected, excited the highest resentment in the family of his brother-in-law. The history states that "Howel ab Rhys, and especiallie his wife, boyling in revenge, drew another draught against Ievan ab Robert in this manner. Ievan ab Robert's mother was of the house of Even-mel-goed, in the county of Cardigan, and sister to Rhytherch ab Ievan Lloyd, then, and yet, the greatest family in that countie." \* \* \* \* \* [Here an omission of a few lines in copying the original MS. leaves us at a loss to discover what Ievan ab Robert's maternal family had to do with what follows. However, a little consideration makes the matter clear enough.] It would appear that these Cardiganshire relatives of his had sent to him, for his safe keeping and protection, certain partisans and followers of theirs who had been implicated in some of the dreadful feuds of the day, and sought concealment from justice. Thus hiding away in the premises of Ievan ab Robert, they stood as known outlaws and murderers, precisely on the same footing with the emissaries of Howel ab Rhys, whom his brother-in-law had caused to be executed at Chirkeland. But here we return to our old historian again.

\* *Gallt* or *Allt*, is a wooded precipice, or hill side, and *Morva-hir* the long marsh; the whole implying the hill-side wood by the long marsh.



"It hath before been mentioned to have been customary in Chirkeland and other parts of Wales, for the Llawrudds [red-hands], to resorte to the most powerfull of the gentry, where they were kepte very choicely. Howel ab Rhys, understanding that Ievan ab Robert and his people had occasione to goe to Carnarvon assizes, thought it a fit time [a fair opportunity] by force to enter his house, and apprehend all those [under his protection], and to bring them to Carnarvon to be hanged; for there were none of them but stooede outlawed of murther. To this end, to strengthen himselfe in his purpose, he sent for David ab Jenkin, his cousin-german, then a famous outlawe in the rocke of Carreg y walch, with his crew and followers to assist him, and suddainlie came in a morning to the hall of Ievan ab Robert's house, where they were in the outhouses about, and stowed in upper chambers, in the lower end of the hall, and none to be seen."

Some details of this *break-of-day* attack on the house of Ievan ab Robert differ a little in the relation in the different editions of the "History of the Gwyder Family." In one, it is stated that the watcher on the *Garreg* (the highest rock in the vicinity of the house) announced the approach of the hostile party; and in the next instant they rushed forward, broke down the court gate, and commenced battering the outer door of the mansion. It happened most fortunately for the family that this especial morning was devoted by the careful mistress of the habitation, the lady Catherine, for that useful piece of domestic housewifery mead-brewing. Unlike our lie-a-bed modern mistresses, in the right good spirit of the olden day, the wife of Ievan ab Robert was personally superintending the distilling process of that important convivial beverage, and might be seen this eventful morning, passing to and fro, giving orders to her maids, among the steaming vats and seething cauldrons. Suddenly the ominous warning of the watcher struck upon her ear, and in the consequent agitation dissipated all further thoughts of her present occupation in the thrilling and all-absorbing consideration how the house was to be defended. In the next instant the tumultuous rush, shouts, and batter-

ing of the assailants came nearer and louder. The destruction of the court gate by the sledge hammers and axes of the foe, as might be expected, was scarcely an instant's impediment to their destructive march, and their loud shouting and thundering at the outer door of the mansion immediately followed. The lady of Ievan ab Robert on the first notice of danger had sent one of the girls to rouse the sleeping men in the different parts of the house, few as they were in number, many having accompanied her husband to Carnarvon; while another hearty lass was put to ring the alarm bell with her whole strength of arm and body. In the meantime, with the coolness and intrepidity of a practised leader, she gave her instructions to the rest of the fair ministers of the mead brewery, how they were to turn warriors on the occasion, and with such weapons as never before or since has been used for attack or defence. In an instant every female followed their mistress, each bearing a pan full of the boiling mead-wort, ready to salute the first intruder. As the inner door flew to splinters under the ponderous blows of the assailants, and the foremost of the enemy crossed the threshold, while wondering to see none but women to oppose them, each had dashed in his face a vessel full of the scalding fluid prepared for his reception. Those behind, ignorant of the impediment to their intrusive ingress, pushed forward, and received similar compliments the moment they exhibited their faces, and quickly dropped on their prostrate companions who, on the floor, were writhing and roaring with excessive torture. The maidens who had retreated in good order, under the instructions of their undaunted mistress, immediately returned to the charge with pans refilled with the steaming mead, and discharged them as before with similar effect in the faces of the assailants, which for a while prevented their advances many yards into the interior of the dwelling. Happily at this time the sleeping men having been roused from their heavy slumbers, now came armed to the attack, and relieved the fair combatants from their toil and peril. The ever-wakeful genius of the lady Catherine, fatigued as she was, did not limit her exertions to what we have related—for as we learn from Sir John

Wynn's history, that the alarm was given out of doors, far and near, which brought assistance to the defenders of the house; all the men within being engaged, the information could be conveyed only through the agency of the females, one of whom, it is probable, was dispatched by her mistress for the purpose through the rear of the mansion. But the rest of the narrative of this memorable attack and defence of Ievan ab Robert's house we give in the words of our old historian.

"These people of Ievan ab Robert's that were in the hall [those first up] raysed a crie, and betooke themselves to their weapons; whereupon the outlawes awaked, and alsoe betooke themselves to their weapons, and bestirred themselves handsomely. The house was assaltd with all force, and pierced in divers places, but was well defended by those that were within: for having made diverse breaches, they durst not enter; a few resolute men being able to make a breach good against manie. Upon this the crie of the country did rise, and Ievan ab Robert's tenants and friendes assembled in greate numbers (whereof Robert ab Inco was captaine), who fought with the besiegers, and in the ende with their arrowes did drive them from one side of the house, who continually moved round and assembled the other side. After they had continued all that day, and all the following night in that manner, the next morning, seeing they could prevayle little to enter the house, they came to a parley with Robin ab Inco, who advised them to begone in time: 'for, said he, as soon as the water of Traeth-mawr will give leave,\* Ievan Krach, my master's kinsman, will be here with his Ardydwy men, and then you shall be all slayne.' This Ievan Krach was a man of greate accounte in those dayes in Ardydwy,† and dwelt at Gally-lydan, in the parish of Maen-turog. Whereupon they gave over their enterprize, and returned to Bron-y-voel, to Howel ab Rhys his house; when the outlawe David ab Jenkin advised his cosen Howel to take his brother-in-law Ievan ab Robert for his friende and neighbour. 'For, said he, I will not come with thee to

\* Meaning as soon as the tide would permit him to cross.

† Ardydwy is a Hundred in the N. W. of Merionethshire.



invade this man's house when he is at home, seeing I finde such *hot resistance* in his absence." In this last allusion, it is probable that he more particularly referred to the scalding mead by which his first advances were so signally defeated.

The affectionate meeting of Ievan ab Robert and his heroic wife on his return from Carnarvon assizes may be easily conceived. She had not only been the means of defending his household, but utterly baffled the aim of his adversary to wound his pride, and obtained for her husband one more triumph over his implacable enemy, although that enemy was her own brother.

It is by no means difficult to conceive the state of animosity between two such females as the wives of Howel ab Rhys and Ievan ab Robert, for very different was the character of Catherine to that of her brother's mischief-brewing wife. If the former may be allowed to stand as the "*Boadicea*" of private life of those days, the latter has her full claim to a criminal parallel with Cartismandua, of cruel and treacherous memory. Catherine ever aimed to avert evil, while her opponent "*nursed her wrath*" till it teemed with deadly bitterness, and overflowed in deeds of bloodshed, as in the heinous case of the murder of the parson of Llanvrothen.

It was soon after this spirited defence of her household that Catherine departed this life, doubtless to the deep regret of her admiring contemporaries; and most especially of her husband and children, to whom such a woman must have been singularly dear, in those noblest of feminine characters—a good wife and mother.

It was a short space after the Yorkist earl of Pembroke made his destructive visit to North Wales, the plague came to aid his desolating march, and in the flower of his life, the thirty-first year of his age, carried off Ievan ab Robert, at his house at Caselgyvarch. He had married a second time, and left three children by his first, and as many by his second wife; but his death entirely ended the strife between his survivors and the fierce, restless family of Howel ab Rhys, his brother-in-law.

## CATHERINE,

DAUGHTER OF ROBIN VAUGHAN OF DENBIGHLAND, AND WIFE  
OF RHYS AB EINEON OF HENBLAS, DENBIGHSHIRE.

THIS lady, the cousin of Ievan ab Robert, who, with his wife, figures in the preceding memoir, was a gentle contrast to the spirited females of these turbulent times; and as gentleness in woman is more attractive and winning than any demonstrations of violent passion, although elicited in our own behalf, it is probable that sweet attribute won her kinsman's best regards, and saved her and her family from ruin; otherwise his public duties must have doomed them to destruction. Catherine was the daughter of Robin Vaughan of Denbighland, and married to a gentleman named Rhys ab Eineon. They resided at Hênblâs\* in Maethbrwd, Denbighshire; and although they were partisans of the house of York, and Ievan ab Robert the active adherent of the Lancastrians, the latter allowed the domestic affections to predominate over his politics. In his terrible and destructive visit to their neighbourhood, while the dwellings of the friends of York blazed, and their inmates fled to the mountains, or perished by the sword or fire, the domicile of his gentle cousin Catherine was held sacred, and he even made it his temporary place of sojourn. As a stern picture of the ferocity of the times, and the relentless cruelty of that memorable civil war, and to exhibit the danger which this family escaped, from the interest of Catherine with her cousin, we quote the following from Sir John Wynn's "History of the Gwydir† Family:—"

"The wars of Lancaster and Yorke, beginning this summer, made Ievan ab Robert forgetfull of his promise to redeeme the lands; for in the time of that civill warre land

\* Hênblâs signifies old-place.

† The name of Gwydir is derived from Gwaed-dlr, signifying "bloody land," from the mansion being built near the spot where a bloody battle was fought, in the year 592, between the sons of Howel Dda and Ievan and Iago, two sons of Edwal Voel, who had usurped the sovereignty of North Wales. The house was erected about the year 1598, by John Wynne ab Meredith.



was not ought worth, neither was it redeemed during his life. In those warrs Ievan ab Robert ab Meredith, even in the sixth of Edward the Fourth, with David ab Jenkin and other captaines of the Lancastarian faction, wasted with fire and sword the suburbs of the town of Denbigh. In revenge of this Edward the Fourth sent William, earle of Pembroke, with a great army to waste the mountaine countreys of Carnarvon and Merionethshire, and take the castle of Hardlech (held then by David ab Eineon for the two earles, Henry, earle of Richmond, and Jasper,\* earle of Pembroke), which earle did execute his chardges to the full, as witnesseth this Welsh rime—

‘Hardlech a Dinbech pob dor  
Yn cunnev,  
Nantconwy yn farwor  
Mll a phedwarcant mae Ior  
A thrugain ag wyth rhagor.’”

*Translation*—At Harddlech and Denbigh every house was in flames, and Nantconwy in cinders—one thousand four hundred (years) from our Lord, and sixty-eight more.

“In that expedition Ievan ab Robert lay one night at the house of Rhys ab Eineon, at Hênblás, who married his cosen Catherine, daughter of Robin Vaughan; and setting forth very early, before day, unwittingly carried upon his finger the wrest† of his cosen’s harpe, whereon (as it seemeth) he had played over night, as the manner was in those days, to bring himselfe asleepe. This he returned by a messenger, unto his cosen, with this message withall, that he came not into Denbighland to take from his cosen as much as the wrest of her harpe: whereby it appeareth that by his means neither her house, nor any of her goods were burnt, wasted, hurt, or spoyled. Thus both her houses, Hênblás and Brynsyllty escaped the earl Herbert’s desolation, though the same consumed the whole burrough of Llanrwst, and all the vale of Conway besides, to *cold coals* (cinders).

\* England had a *duplicate* set of nobles in those days, one of the Yorkist, and the other of the Lancastarian side. As the king of either party prevailed, his followers displaced those who held their estates and titles. In this instance we have two earls of Pembroke at the same time; William Herbert under the house of York, and Jasper Tudor of the Lancastarian side; the former having received his honours from Edward the IV. and the latter from Henry VI.

† The wrest of a harp is the hollow iron with which the strings are tuned; this term is still used by the harpsichord tuners for an instrument which they use for the same purpose.—*Note by the Hon. Daines Barrington.*

## CATHERINE OF FRANCE,

DAUGHTER OF CHARLES VI. OF FRANCE, QUEEN OF HENRY V.  
OF ENGLAND, AND AFTERWARDS WIFE OF OWEN TUDOR,  
FOUNDER OF THE ROYAL RACE OF TUDOR.

CATHERINE, the youngest daughter of Charles VI. of France and Isabella of Bavaria, was born in 1401. Her elder sister Isabella, had been married to Richard II. of England at seven years of age; and on the murder of that unhappy king, in 1400, she was detained in honourable custody by the usurper of his throne Henry IV., perhaps the youngest widow and queen-dowager on record, being then only eleven years old. The court of France repeatedly demanded the liberation and return of the young queen; but instead of acceding to their desires, Henry made overtures to the royal family of France to have her married to his son, the prince of Wales, afterwards king Henry V. Avoiding a positive refusal, they evaded his desire as long as possible; "for," says Rapih, "neither Charles's brother nor uncles would ever consent to it, not being able to think of marrying the young queen to a prince whose father was generally reckoned the murderer of her first husband. They alleged, however, another reason for declining it; namely, that her father not being in a condition to manage his affairs, they durst not treat of his daughter's marriage without his consent.\* A second reason why Henry deferred

\* Her father being at this time insane; the cause of his insanity (whence the mental imbecility of his grandson Henry VI. of England) is thus related by the French historians. "As the king was marching at the head of his army, to subdue and arrest a criminal baron, when he entered the forest of Mans, a man clothed in white, and of a hideous aspect, suddenly sprang from a thicket, and seizing his horse's head, exclaimed, 'advance no farther—thou art betrayed oh king!' " Thiers observes, "such an incident was scarcely needed to turn so weak a brain as that of Charles VI." He became raging mad. Having recovered some time afterwards, he relapsed into derangement at the end of a masked ball, in which his clothes caught fire. It was in vain that a pretended magician came forth to cure him: he remained *demented* with lucid intervals throughout his life.

Isabella's restitution was, because he knew the money Richard received with her would be demanded. However, as he had no plausible pretence to detain her, he consented at last to restore her with *part* of her jewels.\*

When Henry V. came to the throne, instead of repeating the demand of Isabella, his pride perhaps being hurt at the former evasion or refusal, he sought her younger sister Catherine for his future queen. Henry's first introduction to Catherine was in France, on May 29th, 1419, during the negotiations between the English and French commissioners, respecting the terms on which the conqueror of Agincourt consented to arrest hostilities between the two countries—Rapin relates the matter thus—"The court of France being at Pontoise, Henry came to Mante in order to be near the place of conference. From these two towns it was that the two courts repaired every day to the place appointed. The first day the queen of France brought the princess Catherine her daughter, with whom Henry was charmed. The effect of this first sight being very visible, the queen believed she should inflame the desires of the prince by not letting her daughter appear any more. Henry soon perceived her design. He found the princess was to serve for a decoy

\* Rapin remarks, "he (Henry IV.) managed so artfully, that in the conventions made at Lellingham, there was no mention of restoring her treasure; that became the subject of another negotiation." As queen Isabella's dowry and jewels became the fruitful source of disputation between the two kingdoms, a statement of the particulars will not be uninteresting. Richard's second marriage was with Isabella of France, in 1396, solemnized under splendid tents, raised between Andres and Calais, where the respective courts met and vied with each other in magnificence, and where the treaty for a twenty-eight years' truce between England and France was signed. Richard is said to have expended on this occasion three hundred thousand marks, "a sum," says Rapin, "far exceeding that of two hundred thousand marks, which he received in deduction, of what was promised him with his queen." In 1402, the French ambassadors again demanded the restitution of queen Isabella's dowry and jewels, but were quickly silenced when the English ambassadors, as instructed by the witty Bolinbroke, made reply, "that their master would doubtless agree to deduct that sum out of the million and a half of crowns, still due to England, for the ransom of their king John (taken prisoner by Edward III. at Poitiers)."  
In the project of a treaty with Henry V., in the year 1419, the following article appears:—"The king of England shall repay the six hundred thousand crowns given to Richard II. in part of the eight hundred thousand promised with queen Isabella; and, moreover, four hundred thousand for that princess's jewels detained in England, to which 'Harry of Monmouth,' replied with humorous bluntness, 'the king is willing that this article be allowed out of the arrears due for king John's ransom. However he is surprised at the demand of four hundred thousand crowns for queen Isabella's jewels, when they were not worth a quarter of that sum.'" It is to be remembered that the gallant Henry married Catherine without either dowry or jewels; the sovereignty of France, according to treaty, being his after her father's death.



to ensnare him. But to frustrate the queen's expectation, he told the duke of Burgundy, it might be depended upon, he would never quit his arms till he had the king and the princess his daughter in his power, and had expelled him the kingdom in case he opposed it." Thus the common trick of a "managing mother," resorted to by this cunning French queen, was demolished at once and given to the winds by the rough plain dealing of the English king, who, it must be admitted, adopted rather a Petruchio-like style of wooing—and ultimately may be said to have carried his point at the end of his sword. Accordingly, agreeable to the conditions of the treaty of Troyes, he was married to that princess on the 2nd June, 1420; Catherine being then in her nineteenth year, and Henry in his thirty-second. She was crowned queen of England in February, 1421, and in the latter part of the same year, she gave birth to a young prince, who afterwards became Henry VI. This was perhaps the most happy, as it certainly was the most brilliant period of the life of Catherine—as she was at the same time queen of England and queen-regent of France. After her marriage both Henry and Catherine passed frequently to and fro between England and France—residing for a brief space alternately in each. Rapin states, "in April, 1422, Queen Catherine arrived from England, attended by the duke of Bedford, who had left the regency to the duke of Gloucester his brother. The two courts joining at Bois de Vincennes, went from thence soon after to keep the Whitsun holidays at Paris. Henry lodged in the Louvre, and Charles in the palace of St. Pol, where he had but a small court, whilst the regent-king's was numerous and splendid. On Whitsunday they dined together in public, the two kings and two queens with crowns on their heads."

All this time Henry was carrying on the war against the French Dauphin; and "whilst he was pleasing himself with the hopes of a victory that would render him master of all France, he was seized with a flux which obliged him to stay at Senlis." Brilliant as the career of Henry had hitherto been, it was destined to be of brief duration; and he little thought, at the commencement of his illness, that

he was stricken with the fatal malady that doomed him to an early grave. His fortitude, under the severe pains of his complaint, was as exemplary as his courage in the day of battle. He gave the necessary orders suitable to the emergency of the occasion with his usual calmness; and sent the duke of Bedford to supply his presence, with the required troops to oppose the Dauphin—whose arrangements were thereby entirely baffled and destroyed. "Hoping his distemper would wear off, after resting a little at Senlis, he took a litter, in which he was carried at the head of his army. But his illness still increasing, he resolved to return to Vincennes. Convinced at length that there were no hopes of his recovery, and that he was on the point of death, his dying words, amidst his assembled nobles, manifested his intense care for the kingdom's weal, and his tenderness for those most near and dear to him. He conjured them, for God's sake, to remain in strict union for the service of the infant prince who was going to be their king, to take care of his education, and *give the queen all the consolation that lay in their power, and for which she had so great occasion.* This great prince expired on the 31st August, 1422, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, after a triumphant reign of nine years, five months, and eleven days. His body was brought to England and buried amongst his ancestors in Westminster Abbey, with a funeral pomp suitable to the grandeur he enjoyed whilst alive, and to the esteem conceived of him by his subjects."\* He was interred at the feet of Edward the Confessor, in a little chapel, since enlarged and beautified with several statues, and fenced with two iron grates by Henry VII. Queen Catherine who was deeply immersed in grief for the loss of a husband as affectionately tender towards her as he was illustrious in the nation's eyes for his public virtues, to honour his memory to the best of her power, she caused a tomb of grey marble of exquisite conception and workmanship to be erected over his grave. She also had cast a massy silver gilt image of the deceased prince, in royal attire, said to have

\* Rapin.



been extremely like him,\* which was placed on his tomb; altogether a very touching memorial of conjugal affection, happily combining with the national sympathy, for the loss of one of England's greatest heroes.

Severely as Catherine was afflicted by the loss of her renowned royal husband, she had yet another blow to endure, which she was ill prepared to withstand. On the 21st October of this same year, less than two months after the death of Henry, she had to lament the decease of her father Charles VI. of France, whose long insanity became the source of the most frightful evils to that unhappy land. The position of her native country at this time, in regard of the nation of her adoption, must also have been excessively distressing to her; for her infant son, then only nine months old,† and her brother Charles, late Dauphin, were by their different partisans at the same time proclaimed kings of France.

Rapin gives the following picture of these times—"whilst the duke of Bedford (protector and uncle of the infant king) was taking all necessary precautions to settle the affairs of his royal nephew, the Dauphin was no less intent upon his. He was at Espaly, a house belonging to the bishop of Puy, when he heard of his father's death. He shed many tears at the news, whether Nature roused herself upon the occasion, or he had really preserved an affection for a father who was not to be blamed for the mischiefs he had done him. The first day he appeared in mourning, but on the morrow put on scarlet, and was proclaimed king of France with all the solemnity the circumstances of his court, and the place he was in, would permit. After that he came to Poitiers, where he had removed the parliament of Paris. He was crowned there in the beginning of November, because the city of Rheims, where the coronation of the kings of France is usually performed, was in the hands of the English. Thus Henry VI. and Charles VII. assumed, both at the

\* "About the latter end of the reign of Henry VIII. the head, being of massy silver, was broken off and conveyed away with the plates of silver that covered his trunk, which now only remains of heart of oak."—*Rapin's History of England.*

† In the first parliament of the reign of Henry VI., queen Catherine came and sat among the lords with the infant king in her lap.

same time, the title of king of France, and disputed with each other the possession of the throne thirty years."

The history of Catherine, from the death of Henry V. to the manhood of her son, must have been that of a queen-mother without a court, in consequence of the war, which kept the nobility of the country so long away; and perhaps, from the first female in the state, she came to be considered of secondary, if not of third degree importance. We infer this from the circumstances of the duke of Bedford, regent of France, and the duke of Gloucester, protector of the young king, being both married; and their high and haughty ladies perhaps capable enough, with impunity, of mortifying the quiet and unassuming Catherine, who appears in all things to have been a happy and amiable contrast to her mischievous and intriguing mother, the queen of France;\* and yet Catherine, as we shall see, was not deficient in spirit when occasion called it forth.

We have now arrived at the portion of this biography which may fitly be distinguished as the second part of the memoirs of Catherine of France. In the first division of her life, we have seen her surrounded with all the "pomp and circumstance" attendant on her felicitous position, as the daughter of one mighty king, and the honoured wife of a still mightier. We have seen her, from a daughter of France and a crowned queen of England, by the sudden death of her heroic lord, become a queen dowager at the early age of twenty-one; and from having been "the observed of all observers," almost sink into a cypher at the court where she was so lately idolized. That she afterwards evinced the possession of a mind which dared to break through the wretched conventionalities which cast their mist of false seeming around her, and seize on the best realities within her reach appertaining to human happiness; that she dared to think and act according to her convictions of what is best—these noble instances of true womanhood,

\* Isabella of Bavaria, queen dowager of France, died on the 30th September, 1435. Rapin says, "seeing the prosperity of the king, her son, whom she mortally hated, and the desperate condition of the English, she died at Paris with grief and vexation. She was universally hated by the French, who considered her the principal cause of the ruin of the kingdom."

drew from the minions of the mighty, the parasites of power, the sycophants of place and office, and such palace furniture and machines, nothing but unmerited obloquy, the echoed cant of the heartless and truthless of her day.

In the year 1427, among the visitors at court, queen Catherine particularly noticed a young gentleman of very handsome features and graceful carriage. Learning that he was a Welshman, his name Owen Tudor, and that his countrymen were famous for dancing, with the animated gaiety of Frenchwoman, the young queen dowager desired him to dance in her presence. Willing, perhaps, to show off his graces in an accomplishment of which he was reputed to be somewhat masterly, Owen immediately complied—and with the utmost animation danced a Welsh jig; and during its performance met the applause of the surrounding ladies, especially of the queen herself. But towards the conclusion of this Welsh specimen of the “poetry of motion,” an accident took place of a whimsical description. According to one record, in the course of his evolutions, he trod upon her majesty’s toe, and thereby lost his footing and fell; according to another account, in a turn of over-wrought agility, not being able to recover his equilibrium, the disaster we are about to state occurred. But all accounts agree that his fall was “*into the queen’s lap* as she sat on a low stool with many of her ladies about her.” Pughe, in his “*Cambria Depicta*” says, “the gracefulness of his manner in making an apology, soon procured him a pardon; the queen, very pleasantly jesting with him, said, that so far from offending her, it would only increase the pleasure of herself and the company if he would repeat the same false step or mistake.”

It is to be inferred from subsequent events, as well as from the statement of different authors, that the queen became deeply in love with him; and that by private arrangements they afterwards frequently met; and the upshot of their improved acquaintance was a resolution on the part of Catherine to give her hand in marriage to this private gentleman of Wales. When her majesty’s determination to espouse him became known, malignity, envy,



and national prejudice, with every other species of uncharitableness, seemed to have formed a combination with the fiends, who came singly, in pairs, and in parties, to buz in her ears that she was about to commit an inconceivable enormity in marrying a Welshman. That a Welshman was but another name for a savage, or barbarian; one whose claim to a relationship with the human race was more than problematical, and some day or other might very probably be disproved. It was with some such logic as this that the catholic priesthood of Spain denounced Joseph Bonaparte as a one-eyed monster, which eye of fiendish lustre they said he sported in Cyclopean fashion in the centre of his forehead. Although the Spaniards of Madrid daily saw this handsome brother of the French emperor on horseback riding through the streets with the usual number of eyes set in their accustomed places, none but the heretical and impious dared believe what so plainly appeared contrary to the statements of their confessors—for the good fathers insisted that ocular demonstration was by no means to be depended on, but was evidently a delusion caused by the evil one. So the pious people of Madrid, like "good catholics," as they were, according to the rules of blind obedience exacted by their church, resigned up their private judgment, and fervently believed that king Joseph bore a most brotherly resemblance to Polyphemus of old, and execrated him accordingly. Queen Catherine, however, was not so docile towards her informants, nor could she by any means be bothered into a belief that was contrary to the evidence of her senses.

Preferring her own taste and judgment in a matter that so nearly concerned herself to those of any others, and perceiving Owen Tudor to be a better looking man, more elegant in his motions, and polite in his manners, than nine out of ten of his traducers, settled the matter one fine morning, in the year 1428,\* by committing with him the unrecalable act of matrimony.

\* Some of the recorders of this marriage insinuate that it occurred *soon* after the death of her first husband, for the obvious purpose of defaming her; but Halle, the severest of her censurers, admits it was in 1428, *after six years' widowhood.*

Yorke, in his "Royal Tribes of Wales," informs us that "Queen Catherine being a French woman born, the relict of Henry V., knew no difference between the English and the Welsh nations\* until her second marriage being published, when Owen Tudor's kindred and countrymen were objected to, to disgrace him as most vile and barbarous; which made her desire to see some of his kinsmen. Whereupon Owen brought to her John ab Meredith,† and Howel ab Llewelyn, his near cousins, and men of goodly stature and personage, but wholly ignorant of the English language and the easy manners of courtly life; for when the queen had spoken to them in different languages, and they were not able to answer her, she said they were the goodliest looking dumb creatures that she ever bebed."

The different authors who have written of this marriage have done their utmost endeavours to disparage both parties; and as Owen and his Welsh supporters insisted on his descent from ancient British princes, in after time satisfactorily proved,‡ both the English and French united to cast a doubt on the assertion. Rapin says "Catherine of France, who had married Owen Tudor, a Welsh gentleman, descended, *it is said*, from the ancient kings of Wales. I do not know whether in those days his descent was much regarded, or was endeavoured to be traced, till after the crown was devolved to the family of the Tudors by the advancement of Henry VII. to the throne. However that be, when queen Catherine espoused Owen Tudor, the marriage appeared so unsuitable that all England was offended at it; and the more, as it was made unknown to the duke of Gloucester, who was then protector. But that

\* This is very improbable, as her father, Charles VI., sent a French army and navy to assist Owen Glendower against England. In 1405 the marshal de Montmorency arrived in Milford Haven with a fleet of one hundred and forty sail, and twelve thousand men. It is true Catherine was very young then, but as a matter of history of her own times she must have heard of these stirring events.

† Of these gallant Welshmen more hereafter in this memoir.

‡ When Henry VII. came to the throne, he set this matter at rest for ever by sending commissioners into Wales to examine into the pedigree of his grandfather. They testified the accuracy of Owen's descent from the Welsh princes of most remote antiquity; and proved rather *too much* than otherwise, as among the records they consulted were those contained in the spurious history concocted by that notorious fabulist Jeffery of Monmouth.



prince's veneration for the memory of the king, his brother, prevented him from giving the queen, his sister-in-law, any trouble." This generous forbearance was worthy of the "good duke Humphrey," whose worth, justice, and great qualities made him the darling of the people of England. Halle, speaking of Catherine says, "who beyng yonge and lustye, folowying more her owne appetyte than frendlely consaille, and regarding more her privat affectione than her open honor, toke to husbonde privlie (in 1428) a goodlie gentylman and a beautifulle persone, garniged (garnished) with manye goodlye giftes bothe of nature and of grace, callyde Owen Teuther,\* a man brought furth and com of the nobile lignage and aunciente lyne of Cadwalader, the last kynge of the Brittones."

It is to be regretted that so little is known of the private lives of Owen and Catherine, but there is every reason to believe they lived very happily together; as their traducers would have been glad enough could they put on record any scandalous anecdote illustrative of the slightest shadow of conjugal infelicity between them. Doubtless Catherine made a good exchange of a dull widowhood, attended with all the hollow-hearted formalities of courtly state, for the solid and pure comforts of private life, and the faithful affections of the kindest of husbands, who was also, "unbonnetted"† as he stood, one of the handsomest men, and of the noblest presence in the kingdom. The pictured likenesses of the royal race of Tudor, from the first to the last, hear us out in the latter statement—inferior as they are all supposed to be, compared with their ancestor Owen, who, although no king himself, nor even knighted till late in life, became the founder of a line of princes the most memorable and renowned in English history.

Nine years after this union Owen was destined to lose his amiable consort. Catherine died at the monastery of Bermondsey, in Southwark, on the 3rd of January, 1437,

\* This is an attempt at spelling the name according to the proper Welsh pronunciation of it. The correct orthography is *Tewdwr*; figurative of a stalwart warrior in the field, signifying *stout tower* of battle—a *tower of strength*. The brawny figure of Henry VIII. is a fair illustration of it.

† "Unbonnetted," a Shakspearean phrase implying without coronet, or bonnet of state.

in the thirty-sixth year of her age. If the splendour of her obsequies could compensate for the obloquy cast on her while living, and since her death, rarely was there seen so magnificent a funeral. Her corpse lay in state at Bermondsey monastery from the 3rd of January to the 18th of February following, set forth and attended with all the pompous ceremonies peculiar to funeral pageants of the church of Rome. From thence a grand procession of the priesthood, in their canonicals, bearing the host and singing requiems, attended the body to St. Catherine's, by the tower of London—from thence to St. Paul's—and so on to Westminster Abbey, where she was interred.\*

By his marriage with queen Catherine, Owen had four children—three sons and a daughter.† His eldest son was Edmund, surnamed of Hatfield, that royal residence having been his birth place. The second son was Jasper—the third Owen—and the daughter bore her mother's name, Catherine. On the death of their mother Edmund and Jasper were placed under the care of an eminent lady, Catherine de la Pole, daughter of Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, and lady abbess of Berking. A petition from her dated 1440 appears on record for the payment of certain money due to her on their account. Notwithstanding the persecution and ultimate neglect which became the lot of Owen Tudor, his children were nobly provided for. Edmund of Hatfield was created earl of Richmond, married Margaret, sole daughter of John, duke of Somerset, and became the father of Henry who succeeded him in that earldom, and afterwards known as king Henry VII. Jasper Tudor was successively created earl of Pembroke and duke of Bedford.‡ Owen, the youngest son, embraced an

\* When Henry VII. laid the foundation of his new chapel there, her corpse (or rather her coffin) was taken up; and says Rapin, on the authority of Sandford and Stow, "she was never since buried, but remaineth still above ground, in a coffin of boards, near the sepulchre of Henry V. her first husband."

† He had also an illegitimate son named Davydd, knighted by king Henry VII., who also took care that his near kinsman should be honourably married, and bestowed on him the hand of Mary, the daughter and heiress of John Bohun of Midhurst, in Sussex, and with her a great inheritance.

‡ The reader of English history will be aware that, during the civil wars of York and Lancaster, there were not only two kings, alternately on and off the

ecclesiastical life in the abbey of Westminster; and had he lived, might have been destined to a mitre or the scarlet hat of a Cardinal; but he died in early life, as did also his sister Catherine.

Alas for Owen Tudor!—splendid and above his sphere as his union with the young widowed queen was deemed, except in his happy intercourse with her during the brief period of their union, little had he to boast of gain in the sum of human happiness by his elevation. Well authenticated history informs us, as before noticed, that “the good duke Humphrey,” of Gloucester, had too much veneration for the memory of his deceased royal brother to disturb his widow\* for her unsanctioned marriage with Owen Tudor. But Rapin adds, “when she was dead, the council (at the head of whom was cardinal Beaufort) had not the same regard for her second husband. They considered it their duty to punish him for his rashness in daring to espouse the king’s mother without the consent of those who governed the kingdom, and ordered him to be imprisoned.† Accord-

thone, but two sets of nobles also enjoying and enduring similar fortunes: as each of the sovereigns with their followers prevailed or lost the ascendant, their partisan nobles were elevated or deprived. Thus, on the defeat of the Lancastrians and the success of the arms of York, Jasper Tudor ceased to be earl of Pembroke, as king Edward IV. raised to that rank Sir William Herbert, the eldest son of William ab Thomas of Rhagland castle, and grandson of the celebrated Sir David Gam. When a change of fortune enabled king Henry VI. to recover his crown, Jasper Tudor also resumed his lost coronet, and ultimately was raised to the dukedom of Bedford.

\* That Gloucester spared him was a sufficient motive for the malignant cardinal of Winchester, who was then chief counsellor to the king, to persecute and oppress him to the utmost of his power. Of this bitter dignity of the church Rapin says, “the cardinal of Winchester, one of the principal authors of the duke of Gloucester’s death, enjoyed but one month the satisfaction of his enemy’s fall. He is said to die in a sort of a passion, that his riches were not capable of exempting him from the common fate of all mankind, and to see himself thereby on a level with the most miserable. One of the masterly efforts of Shakspeare is the death scene of this demon cardinal, in his historical drama of king Henry VI., when prince Henry witnessing the violent contortions and terrible struggles of his final hour, affectingly entreats him to lift his hand, in token of his dying at peace with the world and in confidence of salvation—seeing him expire, exclaims—

‘He dies—and makes no sign!’

Six words, combining a sentence of the most awful import that ever was conceived by poet or uttered by man.”

† During the lifetime of the queen we are told the marriage had been winked at—notwithstanding that a law had been made *after the occurrence* of that event enacting that no person, under severe penalties, should marry a queen dowager of England without the special license of the king.



ingly he was seized and committed—not as some writers have affirmed, to the tower, but as if determined to mortify and degrade him, even in the place selected for his incarceration, to the common prison of Newgate. From thence he escaped by the assistance of his confessor and his servant. He was soon after retaken, and placed in close confinement under the custody of the earl of Suffolk, constable of the castle of Wallingford. His persecutors deeming such captivity too honourable, perhaps, caused him once more to be committed to Newgate—from which he a second time contrived to escape. The extent of his second confinement is unknown, but it does not appear that he was ever committed to custody again. The death of that great criminal and odious statesman, Beaufort, cardinal of Winchester, his prime enemy, occurring in the year 1447, may be the reason why he was no further molested by the authorities of the time.

Although we have now passed the boundary of the personal life of Catherine of France, yet, as a portion of the history of her times, it behoves us to cast a glance on the fortunes of her illustrious widower and sons, who in a short space after her decease became actively engaged in the civil wars which broke out between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, that for thirty years after, with brief intervals between, deluged England with blood, almost annihilated the nobles and gentry of the land on both sides, and ended in the battle of Bosworth field; the result of which was the elevation of her grandson to the throne of England as king Henry VII.

In the year 1452, king Henry VI. was disturbed in his reign by the open claim to the crown of the duke of York, as the nearest descendant of Richard II., dethroned by Henry IV., the former's grandfather. To strengthen their interest, among other means, the government became aware of the expediency of conciliating the natives of North Wales, and engaging them in their cause by bestowing honours on the race of Tudor—as they saw those of South Wales were notoriously under the influence of the Herberts of Monmouthshire devotedly engaged in the service of the house

of York.\* To that end, it was at this time of peril to the reigning dynasty that the two sons of Owen Tudor were ennobled and created earls. As before observed, Edmund became earl of Richmond, and Jasper earl of Pembroke.† But it seems the *olden grudge* against their father, though diminished in its asperity, still existed in a subdued degree, as neither title nor favour of any kind was bestowed on Owen at this period. However, in the wars that immediately followed, Owen Tudor generously became a zealous partisan of the house of Lancaster, from which he had endured so much persecution, and highly distinguished himself by his valour and conduct. What rank he held in the army, or by what means he was introduced into military life, is not on record, but it is supposed he fought in the first instance as a volunteer, and won his subsequent promotion by distinguished services.

In the course of these eventful wars of the Roses, in the year 1460, Owen Tudor was taken prisoner by the Yorkists, and confined in the new castle on the Usk,‡ where his fate appeared inevitably sealed; as in this most rentless of civil wars, capital punishment was always the destiny of every prisoner of rank of either party. But an instance of heroism and refined generosity, on the part of his relatives and countrymen of North Wales, is about to be related, which for the present averted his doom, and at the same time it

\* In addition to attachment to their native military leaders the Herberts, the people of South Wales and a portion of those of the North, were biased in favour of the cause of York by the consideration that the head of that house, who aimed at the crown, was descended maternally from their own regal race; one of the Mortimers having married the princess Gwladys Ddû, daughter of Llewelyn ab Iorworth, and aunt of our last native prince Llewelyn ab Griffith. See her memoir in this work.

† Remarking on this elevation of the sons of Owen Tudor, Pennant states, "the Welsh, flattered by the honours bestowed on their young countrymen, ever after faithfully adhered to the house of Lancaster." How a writer, generally so accurate, could make such a statement appears strange. It is true that the majority of the people of North Wales became Lancastrians; and it is equally true that almost all the natives of South Wales, for reasons before stated, followed the fortunes of the house of York; and no less than five thousand Welshmen perished on the fatal field of Danesmoor, when their army was defeated by the Lancastrians. See the memoir of Ellen Gethin in this work.

‡ The New castle on the Usk, was Newport castle, and not Usk castle, as reported by some writers. In fact the Welsh name of Newport is *Castell Newydd*, or Newcastle. The ruins of this castle, by Newport bridge, have been turned into a brewery these many years past; and we regret to have witnessed how modern Vandalism has destined a portion of the venerable fortress to be pulled down to facilitate the approach to the new railroad bridge over the Usk.



aids powerfully to falsify the barbarity imputed by Pinkerton to be inherent and unchangeable in the Celtic race.

The capture of Owen Tudor, his imprisonment in a strong castle, and his impending fate were soon known, and created a powerful sensation in North Wales. One hundred gentlemen of that country formed themselves into a band, and volunteered their services to rescue him from his captivity or perish in the attempt. Placing themselves under the command of John ab Meredith, who first inspired them with the idea of this enterprize, they travelled southward with the celerity which the imminent peril of the illustrious captive required, till they reached the new castle on the bank of the river Usk. It has not been stated in what manner they contrived to enter this fortress; but probably it was either by bribing its guards, or some well-contrived stratagem, for they were neither in sufficient force nor provided with the necessary engines for taking it by storm. However that may have been they succeeded in their object, rescued their countryman, and bore him off in triumph. On their return towards the north, when only four miles from the castle which they had left, and only two miles beyond Caerleon,\* they suddenly found themselves opposed by a superior number of their enemies, the partisans of the house of York, drawn up in order of battle, to intercept their retreat. Conceiving the destruction of their small party next to a certainty, with undaunted coolness that reflects immortal honour on the man, John ab Meredith made his arrangements for a sudden and desperate onset, as their only feasible chance of escape appeared to be to cut their way through the midst of their enemies. Placing Howel ab Llewelyn and others, who were the sole heirs of their respective houses, in the rear, and out of the brunt of the attack, whilst all his own sons were drawn out in the van, headed by himself. With an animated countenance, full of daring, hope, and confidence, he addressed to them a few

\* Caerleon was formerly an archi-episcopal British city, a Roman station, and king Arthur's seat of sovereignty—but is now, and has been for centuries a mere village, situated two miles from the town of Newport, in Monmouthshire. Donovan the tourist and others have been very successful in their discoveries of remains of antiquity there, especially of Roman coins and utensils.

inspiring words—he begged of them to remember that their conduct in that hour should be correspondent to the prowess and fame of their ancestors; “never let it be said,” added he, “when pointing to this spot in after times, that *here* a hundred gentlemen of North Wales fled before their foes; but rather let the place be ever memorable hereafter as the honoured scene where a hundred north Welsh gentlemen were slain in a noble enterprize before an unequal number of their enemies!” then rushing forward with a shout, imitating his example, they cut a passage through the midst of the Yorkists, and, strange to say, escaped, without losing a man, or suffering any material injury to any of their party except their chief himself. John ab Meredith received a sabre-cut in the face that caused him to be called *Squier y graith*, the squire of the scar, to his dying day.

It is supposed to have been immediately after this fortunate rescue, in the year 1460, that Henry VI. knighted his step-father and half-brother. It must have appeared strange to see his two sons, Edmund Tudor, earl of Richmond, and Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, while their father still remained a commoner; but it has been truly remarked, prior to his knighthood, the government took no further notice of Owen than to punish him for marrying the queen. But this honour of well-earned knighthood, slight as it was, considering his position as the widowed consort of the late queen dowager, the half-brother and step-father of the reigning king, and father of two earls, at least preceded similar honours bestowed in after years on his rival countrymen, the two Herberts of the south, by Edward IV., although the elder of them afterwards, for a brief period, succeeded to the earldom then occupied by Jasper Tudor. This knighthood, however, was not the only reward which accrued to Owen at this time. He had, as a patent expresses it, “in regard of his good services” a grant of the parks and the “agistment” of the parks in the lordship of Denbigh, and the “wodewardship” of the same lordship awarded to him by the government, as the gift of the crown.

Late as these honours and acquisitions fell to him, his enjoyment of them was of very brief space. The following

year, the last of his mortal career, became also the harbinger of the downfall and utter extinction of the cause for which he fought. It was now drawing towards the final setting of the astral glories of the house of Lancaster, while the star of York was in the ascendant. The triumphs of both houses were marked with some of the wildest atrocities during the whole of this merciless and inhuman civil war. Queen Margaret having gained the battle of Wakefield, in which the duke of York, the pretender to the throne, was slain, she caused his head, crowned with paper, to be placed over the gates of the city of York; and the earl of Salisbury, who had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, was beheaded at Pontefract by the command of that remorseless queen, and his head fixed on a pole near the duke of York's.\*

Breathing vengeance against the ferocious queen Margaret and her partisans for the death and dishonouring of his father, the earl of March, soon to be known as king Edward IV., gave battle to her generals, Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, and James Butler, earl of Ormond, whom he met at Mortimer's cross, in Herefordshire, on the 2nd February, 1461. As he was much superior in the number of his army, Edward easily defeated them, and slew three thousand eight hundred of their men—principally Welsh and Irish.

Jasper Tudor, the defeated general in this battle, had the good fortune to escape; but his father, with the ancient spirit of his countrymen, deeming it dishonourable to take to flight under any circumstances of peril, refused to quit the field, and was with several other Welsh gentlemen taken prisoner. Being conducted to the city of Hereford, they were soon after beheaded by the stern command of the earl of March, by this victory now became king Edward IV., in revenge for the death of his father and the earl of Salisbury.

Thus fell the adventurous Welshman Owen Tudor, who, supposing him to have been twenty years of age at the time

\* When Edward IV. won the battle of Towton, on the 29th of March, 1461, he caused the head of his father and the earl of Salisbury to be taken down, and the heads of the earl of Devonshire, the earl of Kyme, and Sir William Hill, to take their places on the city walls.



of his marriage with queen Catherine, in 1428, was only fifty-three at the period of his death. The end of the reign of Henry VI., and ruin of the house of Lancaster, and consequent exaltation of the family of York immediately followed. Had Owen lived twenty-four years longer, he might have witnessed another instance of political reaction, and seen his grandson, "Harry of Richmond," on the throne of England in the character of king Henry VII.

The singularly romantic origin of the most powerful race of sovereigns that ever swayed the sceptre of these realms, has always been a subject of curious investigation with all our chroniclers and historians. Narrative, poetry, romance, and even satire,\* have respectively drawn their materials

\* The English satirists of olden time found abundant food for their avocation in this subject. One of them pretended that queen Catherine, to appease her tormentors who objected to Owen's respectability, sent commissioners of *her own choosing* to Wales to visit his mountain home, the farm house of Pen-myrydd, in the island of Anglesea, to gather and report all the information gleanable there. These worthies were said to have been bribed both by Owen and the queen to give a favourable account; and the former hurried home before them to put all things in their best order previous to their arrival—however they arrived in Anglesea almost as soon as him. On their entrance into his paternal dwelling his ancient mother was seen sitting by the kitchen fire in her beehive pattern straw arm chair, while a long-bearded, lofty-horned he-goat, that seemed the very patriarch of his mountain race, was seated by her side; doubtless a very formidable and trusty guard, as immediately on the entrance of the strangers, he sprang forward and *made head* against them instant, butting the foremost of them in the stomach—he knocked him and his followers backward in a heap, and would have pursued his advantage as they rose had not the servants seized and confused him with a rope attached to a staple in the wall, just as a vicious bull-dog is sometimes collared and muzzled in our days. The old lady was taking her dinner of flummery and milk from a wooden bowl with a horn spoon off one of the most primitive of native tables that the early world ever furnished—namely her lap, or knees. The gentleman who acted as secretary accordingly wrote down that they found his venerable parent supported by a guard such as no sovereign in Europe ever possessed the like; and that she was dining off a table so exceedingly costly that she would not sell it for all the money in the treasury of England. Owen, who had dallied too long before he took his departure from the queen, not expecting these visitors so soon, happened at this very time to be shaving himself, and trimming his moustaches to the most fascinating cut, in the earthen-floor parlour, at a glass of the dimensions of a ticket porter's badge—but suddenly made his appearance to subdue the *goat rumpus* in his turned up shirt-sleeves, strapping his razor the while on his bare arm. The commissioners therefore recorded that they found in his possession a razor strap of such exceeding high value that he protested he would not part with it for ten thousand pounds. Possessing in an eminent degree the poetic talent of turning ugliness to beauty, the accommodating secretary had equally curious entries to read respecting the birch broom worn to the stump standing behind the door, the iron dinner pot and bakestone, with the musical concert performed by the bleating nanny-goats and their kids about the door. The English however would not suffer him to proceed in his report, but confessed they felt fully satisfied that Owen Tudor was a gentleman of more consideration than ever they had previously conceived!

from the simple tale of the loves and happy union of the Welsh adventurer Owen Tudor and the romantic queen Catherine from their own far distant day to the present; yet, after the lapse of four centuries, their story continues to interest the readers of history with unabated zest. A retrospective glance over the memoir here presented to public inspection, in connection with the portion that is to follow, may aid to throw some new light on what has always been questionable, the pretensions of Owen Tudor to a descent from the sovereign princes of ancient Britain. Whatever demerit may attach to this essay on a subject that has engaged so many pens, at least it will not be found that undue national partiality has biassed the writer from the straight path of historical integrity.

Rapin was, doubtless, right in his conjecture that there was very little, if any, inquiry made respecting the descent of Owen Tudor at the time of his marriage. The animosity borne to him by the English appears to have in it less of personality than of that rancorous race-hatred existing from time immemorial between the Saxons and the Celts of Britain.\* The high-born and ennobled of the land despised him probably for his plebeian position in addition to the antipathy of nationality; many may be supposed to have founded their dislike on envy at his success; while the mass of the English population saw nothing worse in him than the heinous offence of being a Welshman. Had those in authority not been blinded by such foolish prejudices, and assiduously put forth judicious inquiries into what really concerned the honour of the nation to learn, the respectability of the family and person on whom the queen had placed her affection, previous to the marriage, it is useless to deny or blink the question, discoveries might have

\* A feeling happily extinct in the present day, if we except certain slight instances generated principally by trade rivalry between the English settlers in Wales and the natives, and some isolated cases, "few and far between," of race-hatred among the most rude and ignorant worshippers of the past, who perversely turn their backs upon the sun of civilization and the onward velocity of the train of progress—wilfully blind to the inexpressible blessings of fraternal and national unity. Fortunately they are very few, periodically declining; and may they be doomed, like those creatures in natural history, to utter extinction when their prolonged existence would rather mar than aid the world in its advances.



been made fatal to this alliance. There certainly existed a dark family secret, which, if divulged and bruited abroad among the English detractors of Owen Tudor, might have ruined his reputation, however personally blameless, even with the enamoured queen herself, and perhaps justified the protector and the council in authoritatively forbidding their union. But the secret was well kept—a proof that Owen had no enemies among the rival families of his own country, proverbial as the Celts have ever been for want of unison among themselves, and for their bitter local animosities. Had popular rumour ever breathed the tale that he was offspring of a man so tainted with infamy that he was compelled to fly his country to preserve his life, and whose name he was ashamed to bear, but bore his grandfather's instead—his ambitious hopes might have been at once blasted by the repugnance even of the queen herself at the startling announcement that she was about to take to her arms the son of a murderer.

He was the grandson of Tudor ab Gorono, who, in addition to his undoubted descent from Cambrian blood-royal (as we shall presently make manifest), was a gentleman not only of high esteem among his own countrymen, but also a favourite of Edward III., who conferred on him the honour of knighthood in acknowledgment of his valour and military services. Meredith, the fourth son of Tudor ab Gorono was the father of Owen. His lot appears to have been more lowly cast than that of the generality of his progenitors, as he filled no higher station in life than that of *Scutiger*, or squire, to the bishop of Bangor; but this comparatively humble state would have been no disparagement to his respectability and standing in the world had his conduct been unimpeachable. It appears, however, that he was guilty of the heinous crime of murder, had to fly his country in consequence, passed the latter portion of his life as a refugee in a foreign land, and died an exile. Thus it is accounted for why the partisans and eulogizers of Owen always dwelt emphatically on his high descent from royal and renowned ancestors, while they took especial care to evade, or pass over unanswered, the question of his imme-

diate parentage. Doubtless (though never hitherto assumed) that gallant and highly meritorious person John ab Meredith, who accompanied him to court on his first interview with the queen, and who saved his life by organizing and carrying out his perilous and eventful rescue from the new castle on the Usk, although called his "cousin," was in reality his brother, and probably his elder.\* But Owen, like Napoleon, was the genius of his family, and nursing adventurous and ambitious projects, renounced the name of his crime-tainted father, and assumed that of his illustrious grandfather: and at the same time, as if to conciliate English prejudices, he dropped the "ap" that linked him to his race, which was as much an object of proud distinction with his countrymen as of ridicule among the natives of England. It appears also that he alone, of all his kindred, spoke the English language, a polite and rare accomplishment among the Welsh in those days, and held in high esteem by the better educated, though scorned by the rude votaries of exclusive nationality.

In the utter absence of record and documentary evidence to cast a light on the subject, the introduction of Owen at the English court has never been accounted for. Pennant imagined that military services, the usual road in those days to such distinction, might have given him the entrance there; but it is unlikely, for had that been the case, it would have been a fair subject for blazoning his reputation and pretensions. The Welsh bards, apt as they were to seize on subjects flattering to their national pride, have been as silent on that theme as the chroniclers and historians. Other writers, with greater colour of probability, have suggested that he might have been a retainer in the retinue of one of the noble families of the day, and went there in the train which accompanied his lord.

Pennant judiciously curtails his long pedigree in the

\* In confirmation of the probability that this conjecture is well founded, it will be observed that John always bore his presumed father's name linked to his own, according to the national custom, "John ab Meredith;" but taking a different method of concealing his parentage, he assumed the relationship of "cousin" to Owen—while his devotedly affectionate conduct towards him evinced the nearer tie of consanguinity.

manner following:—"Notwithstanding that Owen was calumniated, he certainly was of very high descent. Henry VII. early in his reign issued a commission to Sir John Leiaf, priest, Guttyn Owen, and a number of others, to make inquiry into his paternal descent, and they, from our Welsh chronicles, proved incontestably that he was lineally descended by issue male (saving one woman) from Brutus, grandson of Æneas the Trojan, and that he was son to Brute in five score degrees." He then adds, "I shall drop a little short of this long descent. Owen Tudor was assuredly of high blood. He was seventh in descent from Ednyved Vychan, councillor and leader of the armies of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and a successful warrior against the English. His origin was from Marchydd, one of the fifteen tribes. Ednyved's wife was Gwenllïan, daughter of Rhys,\* prince of South Wales: so that he might boast of two royal descents, and deliver down a posterity not unworthy of the British empire."

Well aware how distasteful long genealogical discussions are to the majority of readers, we shall here close this somewhat extended memoir. What further regards the ancestors of Owen Tudor the reader will find in our memoir of the princess Morveethe, an ancestress of that worthy; wherein the curious in Welsh pedigrees will find his descent from the last reigning kings of Gwent clearly traced, even to the birth of Owen himself. This addenda to former researches we derived from a rare old tract written in the days of queen Anne, and preserved in the library of the British Museum.

\* Meaning the "lord" Rhys, grandson to the illustrious prince Rhys ab Tudor.

## GENERAL NOTES TO CATHERINE OF FRANCE.

1. Notwithstanding the general accuracy of Rapin, he gives a very confused and erroneous account of the death of Owen Tudor. He remarks on his repeated escapes from the tower:—"Some say he found means to escape a second time, but being retaken, lost his head. Others say he was not beheaded till 1460, upon being taken in battle fighting for the house of Lancaster. I don't know whether it be certain that Owen was put to death, but it may be affirmed that those who say it was in 1460 were guilty of an error, by taking Owen Tudor the third son for Owen Tudor the father." Sandford remarks on this passage, "it could not be his third son, for he was a monk in Westminster Abbey." Thus the only party in error was Rapin himself, as it was the elder Owen Tudor who suffered decapitation after the battle of Mortimer's Cross, in 1461, a year later than the above record, as correctly stated in our text.

2. Among the historical items of these times the following are worthy of notice. The year 1437 was remarkable for the deaths of two queen dowagers of England: Joan of Navarre, widow of Henry IV., and Catherine of France, widow of Henry V. Joan died at Havering, in Essex, July 10th, and was (interred by the side of her husband in Canterbury cathedral, "where her effigies are still to be seen."—*Sandf. General*. p. 285, *Hall*, folio 134.

3. Of one of the contemporaries and court companions of Catherine of France, we have the following curious account, most strikingly illustrative of the dark age in which it occurred. The enemies of "the good duke Humphry," of Gloucester, falling to injure him personally, determined to wound him through his wife the duchess. Rapin states, on the authority of Hall—"by narrowly observing what passed in his family they learnt that his duchess had frequent conferences with one Sir Roger Bolinbroke, a priest, who was reckoned a necromancer, and a certain woman who was counted a witch. This was sufficient to form a charge of high treason against her. She was accused of making, with these two persons, the king's image in wax; and that placing it before a gentle fire, she intended the king's strength should waste insensibly, as the wax melted, and his life be at an end when the image was all dissolved. By this accusation it was intended to show, the duchess's design was to destroy the king, that the crown might fall to the duke her husband. When the parties accused were examined, the priest denied all, but the duchess confessed she had desired the woman to make her a *love potion* for her spouse, *who sometimes went astray*. Though this confession did not make her guilty of the crime laid to her charge, the priest was condemned to be hanged and the woman to be burnt alive. Their execution took place accordingly; Sir Roger Bolinbroke was hanged and quartered, and the woman, one Margery Gurdeman of Eye, was burnt in Smithfield, October 27th, 1441. As for the duchess, though she would have been the most guilty, had the charge been well proved, out of a pretended regard for the duke, she was only condemned to do public penance in St. Paul's church, and to be imprisoned for life." So much for the wisdom and justice of "the good old times."

4. Catherine had for her contemporaries in England and France, some of the most celebrated females that ever enacted extraordinary parts on the great stage of history, in any age of the world. To begin with the least—Agnes Sorrel, the influential mistress of her royal brother Charles VII., and Mary of Anjou, his queen; both of whom used the most praiseworthy efforts to rouse this lethargic prince from his inactivity, and excited his energies to battle with the invaders of his country. But above all Joan of Arc, the glory of France and the wonder of the world, who ultimately conquered the conquerors of her native land, and freed the soil of France from the presence of her invaders and usurping occupiers. While in England, Margaret of Anjou (Catherine's daughter-in-law), scarcely second to the French heroine in warlike achievements, while supporting the Lancastrian interests, against the pretensions of the house of York during the "wars of the roses," won imperishable fame.

## CATHERINE OF BERAİN,

DAUGHTER AND HEIRESS OF TUDOR AB ROBERT VYCHAN OF  
BERAİN—WIDOW, FIRSTLY, OF SALUSBURY OF LLEWENNI;  
SECONDLY, OF SIR RICHARD CLOUGH OF BACH Y GRAIG;  
THIRDLY, OF MAURICE WYNN OF GWYDIR—AND WIFE OF  
EDWARD THELWAL, ESQ., OF PLAS Y WARD.

IN addition to written record, this lady of many husbands has been ushered down to posterity, in all her Elizabethan grandeur of costume, by a fine painting of her likeness in Llewenni hall,\* Denbighshire, and an excellent engraving from the same in Yorke's "Royal Tribes of Wales." The latter author calls her "a singular character," without giving any instance of her singularities, or referring his readers to any other authority. However, on turning to Pennant, the everlasting text-book to Tourists and note-book fillers on North Wales, we are more amply compensated, and found Yorke had derived from him all that he knew about the lady who is the subject of this memoir.

In his notice of the paintings in Llewenni hall, Pennant says, "I must not omit the portrait of a lady exceedingly celebrated in this part of Wales, the famous Catherine Tudor, better known by the name of Catherine of Beraîn from her estate in the neighbourhood." She was the daughter and heiress of Tudor ab Robert Vychan of Beraîn, and married successively four husbands. Notwithstanding Pennant's remark about her *exceeding celebrity*, which would imply the possession of genius, or the successful exertion of high talents, there appears nothing in her life to entitle her to fame or the homage of pos-

\* Pennant states, "her portrait is an excellent three quarters on wood." By the date, 1568, it seems to have been painted by Lucas de Heere, the only artist I know of in that period equal to the performance. Edward Pugh, who published his "Cambria Depleta" about forty years after Pennant's time, says, "her picture, supposed to have been painted by Lucas de Heere, is now at Lleucog, the residence of Mrs. Wynn's mother."



terity. She is principally remarkable as a great heiress of her time, for her marriages with four men of rank and fortune, and for the number of her descendants. These became allied, according to their claims, to the most distinguished families of North Wales; and Catherine of Berain, in reference to her exemplary obedience to the primitive command "increase and multiply," was called *Mam y Cymru*, the mother of Wales.

Her first marriage was with Salusbury, the wealthy heir of Llewenni, by whom she had two sons, the eldest of whom, Thomas Salusbury, brought heavy grief to his family for his unhappy fate. He was implicated in Babington's plot for the destruction of queen Elizabeth, and was executed as a traitor, on the 21st of September, 1587. Her second son, Sir John Salusbury the strong, succeeded at Llewenni. Her estate of Berain in after time followed the heiress of the Llewenni house into the Combermere family. "Tradition goes," says Pennant, "that at the funeral of her beloved spouse (her first husband) she was led to church by Sir Richard Clough of Bach y Graig, and from church by Maurice Wynn of Gwydir, who whispered to her his wish of becoming her second husband. She refused him with great civility, informing him that she had accepted the proposals of Sir Richard in her way to church; but assured him, that in case she performed the same sad duty (which she was then about) to the knight, he might depend on being her third." She kept her word most religiously, and on the death of Sir Richard Clough, she married Maurice Wynn of Gwydir. She was destined to outlive that worthy also. Pennant says, "as soon as she had *composed* this gentleman, to show that she had no superstition about the number three, she concluded with Edward Thelwal, Esq. (a widower), of Plas y ward, in Denbighshire, who became her fourth husband, and outlived her. By her second husband, Sir Richard Clough, Catherine had two daughters; one married to Wynn of Melai, the other to Salusbury of Bach y Graig, whence is descended our ingenious countrywoman Mrs. Piozzi. By Maurice Wynn she had one daughter, but no children by Edward Thelwal.

The following account of the intermarriages in this family are curious, and illustrative also of the selfish policy pursued in aristocratic families, with the view of keeping their fortunes among themselves, by causing such unseemly unions between kindred near in blood. "Her daughter, by Maurice Wynn of Gwydir, married Simon Thelwal the eldest son of her last husband by a former marriage. Simon Thelwal's son Edward married Sydney the daughter of William Wynn of Garthgynan, the fourth son of Sir John Wynn of Gwydir, the historian; and their daughter and heiress married Sir William Williams of Llanvorda, the eldest son of the speaker of the House of Commons in the reign of king James II. Hence the connection with Sir John Wynn of Wynnstay, who was first cousin to Sidney, and who left his great property to Mr. Williams, her grandson, afterwards Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, the great grandfather of the present Sir Watkin Williams Wynn Catherine, as before observed, died in the lifetime of her fourth husband Thelwal, and was buried at Llan y vydd.\* Edward Pugh, in his "*Cambria Depicta*," says—"from hence (Mr. Yorke, of Erthig's), after a walk of several miles across some black and barren hills through Llan y vydd, I reached the abode of the beautiful Catherine Tudor, called Berain house, a building of great solidity, but little elegance—assuming more the appearance of a monastic cell than a family residence." He concludes his remarks—"but thus, alas! after all her succession of vows poor Catherine herself met the common fate of mortals, and was interred at Llan y vydd." He might have added "where neither monument nor stone is found to record her name or merits." According to Pennant, she departed this life August 27th, and was buried on September 1st, 1591. "I was told that in the locket she wore attached to her gold chain was the hair of her second and favourite husband, Sir Richard Clough of Bach y Graig."

The following account, of the accomplished and philosophical Edward Thelwal, her fourth husband, THE WELSHMAN WHO COULD COMMAND HIS TEMPER, as a lesson to posterity, is too

\* Pronounced Llan-y-veethe.

valuable to be omitted ; especially as the record is from the pen and experience of that eminent worthy whom Yorke denominates "the historical, the philosophical, and right whimsical peer Edward Herbert, first Baron of Cherbury ; a man at once and together, the negociator, the scholar, statesman, soldier ; the genius and absurdity of his time and nation."

"After I had attained the age of nine, during all which time I lived in my grandmother's house at Eyton, my parents thought fit to send me to some place where I might learn the Welsh tongue, as believing it necessary for me to treat with my friends and tenants who understood no other language. Whereupon I was recommended to Mr. Edward Thelwal of Plas y ward, in Denbighshire. This gentleman, I must remember with honour, as having of himself acquired the most exact knowledge of Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, and all other learning, having for that purpose neither gone beyond seas, nor so much as had the benefit of any university. Besides he was of that rare temper in governing his choler, that I never saw him angry during the time of my stay there, and have heard the same of him many years before. When occasion of offence was given him, I have seen him redden in the face, and after remain for a time silent, but when he spake his words were so calm and gentle that I found he had digested his choler ; yet, I confess, I could never obtain that perfection, as being subject to passion and choler more than I ought, and generally, to speak my mind freely, sought rather to imitate those who, having fire within doors, chose rather to give it vent than suffer it to burn the house. I commend much more the manner of Mr. Thelwal ; and certainly he that can forbear speaking for some while will remit much of his passion."

## CENAI THE VIRGIN,

THE EIGHTEENTH DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG.

CENAI,\* otherwise called Cenedlon, is a Welsh saint of considerable note. The church in Breconshire, called Llangenay, is dedicated to her—whence the parish and sainted well, near Crickhowell, of the same name. Theophilus Jones, the Breconshire historian, gives the following account of her from the monkish chronicler Cressy.—“I shall make a short extract from the ponderous folio of this writer. She (St. Ceyna, so he calls her) was of royal blood, being the daughter of Breganus, prince of Brecknockshire. When she came to ripe years many nobles sought her in marriage, but she utterly refused that state, having consecrated her virginity to our Lord by a perpetual vow; for which she was ever after called Keyna the Virgin. At length she determined to forsake her country, and find out some desert place where she might give up her mind entirely to holy contemplation. Therefore directing her journey beyond Severn, and there meeting a woody place, she made her request to the prince of that country that she might be permitted to serve God in that solitude. His answer was, that he was very willing to grant her request, but that the place did so swarm with serpents that neither man nor beast could inhabit it. But she replied that her firm trust was in the name and assistance of almighty God to drive all that poisonous brood out of that region. Hereupon the place was granted to the holy virgin, who, prostrating herself before God, obtained of him to change the serpents and vipers into stones. And to this day the stones in that region do resemble the windings of serpents, through all the fields and villages, as if they had been framed by the

\* Pronounced Kennay—the emphasis being on the first syllable.



hand of the sculptor." Camden, who notices this story in his account of Somersetshire, says that the place is now called Keynsham, between Bristol and Bath, where abundance of that fossil, termed by the naturalists *Corau Ammonis*, is frequently dug up. He is not quite an infidel, though not perfectly convinced of the truth of the origin and cause of these petrifications of serpents, but calls them miracles of sporting nature. Jones adds, "the idea of *Nature's* working or sporting a *miracle*, is certainly Camden's own; though it must be admitted that the sports of Nature are sometimes most whimsical." Camden expressed some degree of surprise at one which he saw dug up from a quarry near the place which he had been describing, "which," says he, "represented a serpent rolled up into a spire; the head of it stuck out into the outward surface, and the end of the taylor terminated in the centre." Cressy proceeds to tell us on the authority of Capgrave, that "after many years spent in this solitary place, and the fame of her sanctity every where divulged, and many oratories built by her, her nephew St. Cadoc\* performing a pilgrimage to the mount of St. Michael, met there with his blessed aunt Keyna; at whose sight, he being replenished with joy, and being desirous to bring her back to her own country—the inhabitants of that region would not permit him. But afterwards, by the admonition of an angel, the holy maid returned to the place of her nativity. There, on the top of a hillock, seated at the foot of a high mountain, she made a little habitation for herself; and by her prayers obtained a spring there to flow out of the earth, which, by the merits of the holy virgin, affordeth health to divers infirmities." In his account of the parish of Llangenny, Theophilus Jones

\* Cadoc (properly Catwg), the son of Gwladys, Brychan Brecheinlog's eldest daughter, was an eminent British ecclesiastic of the sixth century, entitled "the wise," and considered the Solomon of his age. He was abbot of Llancarvan, and became tutor to the celebrated bard Taliesin. He is distinguished for being the first who made a collection of the proverbs, maxims, and adages of the Welsh, augmented by his own compositions, all bearing the general title of "*Diarkeblon of Catwg*," signifying the aphorisms of Catwg. This collection is to be found, both in Welsh and English, in that most excellent post-periodical the "*Camdro-Briton*," by the late John Humphry Parry. There are several churches in Wales dedicated to Catwg, they are called Llangattock, and his name has been inserted on the Roman roll of saints; an evidence at least of his traditional reputation for sanctity.

says, "the situation of the original chapel or oratory, whether erected in her life time or consecrated after death to her memory, is marked by the finding of a small bell used to call the neighbouring audience to prayers." No vestige of any walls appears; but near this spot is Fynon Genau, or the well of St. Cenai—the miraculous origin of which we have just referred to. It was formerly celebrated for its medicinal virtues as most of the saints' wells have been. Perhaps some of the sanctimonious votaries of the ancient faith, who still venerate both the well and its patroness, may consider the following piece of jocularity by Jones, as little short of profanation. "But though this good lady's piety and chastity may have gained her the approbation of her country and the veneration of posterity, though this well at her intercessions may have produced health to the sick—and above all, though she may have inflexibly adhered to her vow of perpetual virginity, it should seem that she occasionally interfered too far in the domestic concerns of the marriage state, apparently from waggery or envy." For we learn from Carew's survey of Cornwall that St. Cenai, or as he writes it, St. Keyne's well, there, had this remarkable effect: that if a new married couple, or one of them approached, the first who drank of the water obtained the command of the house for life. This author relates, in indifferent verse,\* a very humorous story about the well. A stranger being asked by a clown if he knew the effects of the water replied in the negative; being informed of them, and finding Hobbino! was married, asks—

" ' You drank of the well, I warrant, betimes ?'  
 He to the countryman said,  
 But the countryman smiled as the stranger spoke,  
 And sheepishly shook his head ;  
 ' I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,  
 And left my wife in the porch,  
 But she had been wiser !' faith than me,  
 For she took a bottle to church.' "

The present fabric of Llangenny church was probably not erected until the ancient oratory of St. Cenai was in ruins.

\* The doggrel ballad in question was by no less a personage than the late Dr. Southey.

It is built close to the river Grwyne, at the bottom of a *cwm* or narrow deep valley.

Saint Cenai is said to have departed this life on the 8th day of the ides of October, A.D. 490, and to have been buried in her own oratory by her nephew Cadoc. Sometime previous to her death we are informed she had a prospect of her eternal happiness in a future world in a vision—being ministered to, and comforted by angels. To her nephew Cadoc she thus prophesied, “this is the place above all others beloved by me; here my memory shall be perpetuated; this place I will often visit in spirit, if it may be permitted me—and I am assured it shall be permitted me, because our Lord hath granted me this place as a certain inheritance. The time will come when this place shall be inhabited by a sinful people which, notwithstanding, I will violently root out of this seat. *My tombe shall lye a long time unknown, untill the coming of other people, whom by my prayers I shall bring hither; them will I protect and defend, and in this place shall the name of the Lord be blessed for ever.*” These good strangers are not yet arrived, nor has the tomb of the saint been discovered; but we must have patience—who knows what time may bring to pass?

## CORDEILLA,

DAUGHTER OF LEIR, KING OF BRITAIN—WIFE AND WIDOW OF  
AGANIPPUS, ONE OF THE KINGS OF GAUL.

ALTHOUGH this princess of legendary celebrity belongs to that era of apocryphal history called the fabulous ages, yet, as the story of her supposed life is fraught with pathetic interest and noble sentiment, we trust its insertion here will be found both appropriate and desirable; and as this ancient piece of biography is the foundation of that masterpiece of dramatic genius, Shakspeare's "Tragedy of King Lear," it wins additional interest and claims of investigation. To the admirers of our great dramatist (*viz.*, the whole civilized world except the fanatics and utilitarians), it will afford the gratification of comparing the slight and rude materials here presented, with the graceful and stupendous fabric raised by "the man of all time" to the immortal memory of king Leir and his daughter Cordeilla.

To avoid all suspicion of an ambitious attempt at decoration, we shall here put forth the quaint and fantastic version from the "Welsh Chronicles," edited by Percy Enderbie, who, in 1661, published a history of Wales (so called!) entitled "Cambria Triumphans."\* With the foppery, pedantry, and inflated affectation which generally disfigures the style of this learned Scot, we have no more to do than to bespeak the reader's patience and tolerance, as Hamlet endured the "gadfly" Osrick; not for the manner, but the matter of his discourse.

He commences by informing us "that Leir the son of Bladud began his reign in the year of the world's creation 4333. This king was of a most noble and heroick mind, as being questionlesse bred under the discipline of those philosophers which his father had brought from Athens, besides a natural propension of his own to moral vertue; insomuch that his kingdom flourished in great peace and abundance of

\* This most impudent fabrication of a false history of Wales, and the author's motives are fully exposed in our memoir of the princess Nest, queen of Trahaern ab Caradoc.



wealth." \* \* \* (Here follows a tedious account of the cities built by king Leir, with heavy Latin quotations from Camden and Matthew Paris, which in this, and other instances, as they do not relate to Cordeilla, we omit.)

"King Leir beginning now to be aged and full of years, having no heir male,\* he called unto him Gonorilla, Ragan, and Cordeilla, intending, out of the discovery of their love and filial affection and duty towards him, to settle his kingdom upon them. To the eldest he said, 'daughter, I shall desire you to expresse unto me how well and dearly you love and esteem me your aged father;' the young lady hearing a question of so high a nature proposed unto her, first, that her answer may not seem forged, or to have any smack or relish of dissimulation, calls the immortal gods (being then the custome amongst pagans) and all the celestial powers to witness her assertion, and then replies—'my princely lord and father, I love you more than my own soul.' The feeble old man was much taken with this answer, resting satisfied that his daughter did cordially and entirely love him. He calls for the second, propounds the same question; she thinking to outvie her eldest sister, and thereby to endear and engratiate herself into the old man's favour, spares no oaths or invocations and imprecations, assuring him 'that her tongue was too slender a messenger to deliver the depth of her affection and duty, and that she loved him far beyond all creatures.' Leir is tickled and exceedingly solaced with these two answers, and thinks no mortal man more happy in his children than himself. Cordeilla is called for; the same interrogatory used: she wittily perceiving the deep dissimulation and fawning of her sisters, replies—'my dearest father, I am much joyed to see you so well pleased with the expressive answers of my two sisters; for my own part, as a father, I have ever honoured, obeyed, and loved you, and for ever shall; and if you desire further expression from me, know honoured sir,

\* It may here be remarked this account does not agree with the Welsh Triads, in which a chieftain of celebrity is mentioned named Brân ab Llŷr, or Brân the son of Lear; and no notice occurs of the three daughters of that ancient British king who flourish in this chronicle. On the contrary, the only daughter of Llŷr, or Lear, recorded in the Welsh Triads is Bronwen, whose memoir has had a place in this work.

that as much as you deserve to be loved, so much I love you, and no more.'

"King Leir being nothing pleased with the integrity of his third daughter's answer, *obsequium amicos veritas odium parit*—bethinks himself how he may best dispose and bestow his two eldest daughters, to their most content, honour, and advancement. The eldest, therefore, he espouseth to the duke of Cornwall; the second to the duke of Albania, which is now called Scotland; dividing his kingdome betwixt them in reversion, and a moiety for their present maintenance and livelihood: nothing being left for the poor lady Cordeilla, whose tongue was the true ambassador of her heart, and whose heart hated all dissimulation and hypocrisy.

"Fame, who is nothing slow in reporting the transactions of eminent persons, especially kings, sounds this passage of king Leir in France, and with a shrill note echoes forth the beauty, modesty, virtue, and the adorning graces which wait upon Cordeilla. Aganippus (an eminent personage, and by some styled king of France through a great mistake, for as Policronicon, Petrus Pictaviensis, Robert Gagwine, Antonius Episcopus, and divers others affirm the name of France was not then known, neither were there any kings, the inhabitants being called Galli, and tributaries to the Romans, and so continued till the time of Valentinianus the emperor) hearing Cordeilla's beauty so highly extolled, her virtue so superlatively commended, deems her a fit companion for his princely bed and fortunes—if so rare a jewel may be purchased. Upon a mature resolution he sends his agents to the court of king Leir, with full instructions to demand Cordeilla in marriage. The offered fortune pleaseth the king, yet he fears the success by reason of his own folly which had given all to the two sisters and left nothing for the third. Leir returns thanks to Aganippus by his ambassadors, shews a willingness to comply with their master's request, and withall lays open his insufficiency to bestow any dowry upon her.

"Aganippus, informed by letters of these passages, is glad his suit and motion finds friendly acceptance, and for

valuing the rich endowments of his so much affected Cordeilla, before all terrene\* riches, so he enjoy the beloved treasure of his heart, desires no more. The espousals are with all solemnity celebrated, and Cordeilla answerable to the greatnesse of her birth and quality conveyed to Aganippus, who (by the opinion of those who write that France was governed by twelve kings) was one, and so Cordeilla a queen.

"Leir having thus happily, as might be thought, disposed of his three daughters, being aged, betakes himself to ease and quietness, and so intends to spin out the remnant of his time: but his sons-in-law Monaghanus and Heenninus, the dukes of Cornwall and Albania, envy the happy tranquility of the feeble old king, and each daughter, for all their deep and large expressions of filial love and duty, *patris inquit in annos*: Leir lives too long, too much at ease, his bones would better become a sepulchre than a throne, and since the fatal sisters will not of their own accord cut his thread of life, his daughters, by the hands of their ambitious and covetous husbands will undertake that task.

"Nothing is now heard in Brittain but the clashing of arms, neighing of horses, thundering of trumpets and warlike musick. The impotent king is begirt on all sides with martial troops, and not able to resist two such powerfull enemies, to preserve that small span of life, is forced to flee for succour, being quite forlorn, to his daughter Cordeilla, whom formerly he had so much slighted. The arrival of the father is not long unknowne to the daughter who acquaints her husband with the sad occurrence. Aganippus, out of a heroic spirit compassionating the calamity of a distressed prince, especially his wife's father, puts on a resolution to chastise and revenge so gross an injury, and re-invest him in his throne again. Cordeilla is not idle in meantime, but with all obsequious behaviour, like a dutifull childe, cherisheth her drooping father, accommodates him with all princely provision, and with pleasant speeches drives away his melancholy thoughts, and leaves nothing undone or said which may add vigour and alacrity to his

\* Earthly.

pierced heart. Aganippus arrives in Brittain with his father-in-law, gives battel to the disobedient rebels, gives them the overthrow, and again establisheth king Leir in his regal dignity. But the author of so great happinesse lived not long after, leaving Cordeilla a sad and disconsolate widow.

"King Leir once more holding and guiding the stern of the British monarchy, passed his time with perfect quietness the space of three years; after which time he left this transitory world, leaving his daughter Cordeilla, as well she deserved, to succeed him in his kingdome. His body was buried at Leicester in a vault under the river side which he himself had built, and consecrated to Janus Bifrons.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Cordeilla (this heroine lady), after just revenge taken upon her two sister's husbands, and her father and husband's death, by the consent of most writers, by the joint suffrages and votes of the Britains, was admitted to the royal sceptre, in the year from the world's creation four thousand three hundred and ninety eight years. She governed her people and subjects for the space of five years with great applause and general liking. But the two sons of her sisters, Morgan of Albania, and Cunedagius of Cambria and Cornwall, envying her prosperity and thinking themselves injured in their birthright, their grandfather Leir having divided the kingdom equally betwixt their mothers upon their marriages, conspire together, and mustering their forces, invade Cordeilla, and reduce her to that necessity that she is taken prisoner, and by her merciless nephews cast into gaol. This turn of hard fortune she patiently endured awhile; but perceiving no hopes to regain her freedom and repossess her kingdome, scorning to be any longer a slave to her insulting enemies—seeing she could not free her body from bondage—with true Trajan and masculine heroick spirit, she makes a divorce between her purer soul and encaged carcass, giving it free power to pass into another world, leaving those parts which participated of drossic mold, to be interred again in the earth, from whence at first it came, at Leicester, in the temple of Janus, by the sepulchre of her father."

## CLAUDIA, OR GWLADYS RUFFINA.

As the life of this illustrious lady involves so much of the history of the introduction of christianity into Britain, we may be pardoned for necessarily dilating on that eventful circumstance. It was about A.D. 52, while St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome that the celebrated British chieftain, called in his own language Caradoc, and in the Latin Caractacus, arrived also at the capital of the world. This brave Silurian prince, who had perseveringly opposed the Roman arms for nine years, after being betrayed by the infamous Cartimandua, and previously defeated by Ostorius Scapula, the commander of the Roman forces in Britain, ultimately was destined, with his family, to grace the triumph of Claudius over the subjugated Britons. His noble bearing and spirited address while delivering his celebrated speech before the emperor, and perhaps the ignoble manner in which the Roman arms triumphed over him, through the treachery of a rival sovereign, seems to have wrought powerfully in his favour on the mind of Claudius. The clemency of the emperor ordained that his chains should be knocked off, and the heinous offence of supporting the independence of his country against invaders pardoned. But when he and a portion of his family returned to Britain, his father, Brân ab Llyr, remained in Rome seven years a hostage for his future conduct. It has not been settled by our antiquaries or historians whether Claudia, or Gwladys Ruffina, celebrated for her beauty in Martial's "Epigram," and noticed in St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy, was the sister or the daughter of Caractacus, but it is generally supposed the latter.

Hughes, in his "*Horræ Britannicæ*," observes on this period of history—"the state of Britain during the reign of Claudius and of Nero attracted the attention of the whole Roman empire; and the intercourse between the new province and the seat of government was daily increasing in



importance. In that state of things St. Paul was brought to Rome a prisoner; famed, even before his coming, as an abettor of a new religion. As the apostle was permitted to live in his own apartments, although guarded as a captive, he received all those who chose to resort to him for information and instruction; and hereby the purpose of divine providence, with respect to the spread of christianity through the world, was promoted. In that great capital persons of different ranks, employments, and offices might be found; ambassadors, captive princes, merchants, and mechanics. Several of these would be prompted by curiosity to make inquiries respecting Paul, the principal teacher and propagator of the religion of him who was condemned by Pilate to the cross." On the arrival of Caractacus and his family at Rome Hughes remarks—"St. Paul could not continue unacquainted with these transactions; nor was it possible for a mind like his to feel indifferent to events that regarded the happiness or misery of mankind by deciding the fate of nations. The subjugation of the island of Britain by the Romans would be regarded by the apostle as likely to terminate in the good of that country. That by means of the British captives returning home to their native land, where they had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the christians and their religion, the knowledge of christianity might be conveyed to our island is no improbable conjecture. Pious soldiers in the Roman army, as well as officers, civil or military, must also become instruments of diffusing the same divine knowledge in Britain, as well as in other parts of the empire where they were stationed.

It is therefore reasonable to suppose that, by means of the family of Caractacus returning to Britain, the gospel might have been introduced among their countrymen. That what we here suppose was so in reality, we are assured from faithful documents long preserved, though in obscurity, and therefore not to be despised because not blazoned abroad in the world like most of the monkish fictions. In those historical notices, handed down to us in the form of Triads, we have some account of the blessed event of which we are speaking.

After quoting the well-known Triads and other authorities bearing on the question of the christian religion having been brought into Britain by the agency of Brân ab Llyr, father of Caractacus, Hughes comes to the immediate subject of our memoir, the claims of the lady Claudia, or Gwladys Ruffina, to be considered the first British christian.

Another circumstance has been noticed by archbishop Usher, and before him by bishop Goodwin. St. Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, makes mention of Linus, Pudens, and Claudia; Linus is supposed to be the same as the first bishop of Rome of that name. Pudens and Claudia are thought to be the same persons on whom the poet Martial composed his epigrams. Martial's Claudia was undoubtedly a British lady, as appears by the poet's encomium upon the graces of her person, the honour of which he seems to envy her native isle—

"Claudia cœruleis, cum sit Ruffina Britannis  
Edita, cur Latias pectoreo plebis habet?  
Quale decus formæ? Romanum credere matres  
Italides possunt, Attides esse suas, &c."

This handsome compliment of the Roman poet, paid to our British beauty, is thus imitated by the Rev. Peter Roberts—

"If Claudia's of the wood-stain'd British race  
Whence is that lovely form, that heavenly face?  
Why does the Roman and the Grecian dame  
Dispute her birth, and urge a jealous claim?  
Thus blest ye Gods, still bless the happy pair,  
And make their offspring your peculiar care;  
Her love, his only; mutual be their will,  
And may her sons her latest wish fulfil."

Thackeray, whose new work on British church history we have referred to under the head of "Boadicea," translates Martial's epigram more literally—

"Claudia, of azure-painted Britons born,  
What Latian wit and Latian grace adorn!  
Such forms might Rome among her daughters place,  
And Attic matrons deem of Attic face."

From another epigram,\* by the same poet, it appears that

\* Martial, Lib. IV., Epl. 13.

Claudia was ultimately married to the Roman named Pudens, before referred to ; it is thus translated by Thackeray—

"O Rufus ! Pudens, whom I own my friend,  
Has ta'en the foreign Claudia for his wife ;  
Propitious Hymen, light thy torch, and send  
Long years of bliss to their united life."

Thackeray considers Claudia Roman born, but of British parents, who were then living in the "eternal city" as hostages. He thus concludes his remarks—"under these circumstances, we may, I think, consider this Pudens, and this Claudia, the same with the persons of those names mentioned by St. Paul in his second Epistle to Timothy, 'Eubuleth greeteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and all the brethren.'

The following observations, by Hughes, are both argumentative and decisive of the question at issue:—"Some have thought that the very name of this lady indicates her British origin ; and they argue that her name, in the language of her country, would be Gwladys Ruffyth. But was this lady then the same with the Claudia of St. Paul as our antiquaries have argued ? it is observed to this, that Martial flourished in the reign of Trajan ; to obviate which, it may be said, that the poet in his youthful days composed the epigrams on Linus, Pudens, and Claudia. On the same ground we shall not object to Claudia being the daughter of Caractacus. After the decision of the learned Usher in this case it would not be decorous to dispute the point ; and it follows that Claudia was the first native Briton who embraced christianity ; that by her means the rest of her family were converted ; and that these, in company with certain other disciples of St. Paul, were the instruments of planting the tree of life in Britain.\*

\* In addition to Claudia we have two other ladies in this work, who were not only contemporaries, but of similar tastes, convictions, and aspirations : namely, Pomponia Græcine, wife of Aulus Plautius, first Roman governor of Britain, who was tried for her life on account of her attachment to christianity and abandonment of the gods of Rome ; and a Roman lady named Tecla, also one of the converts of St. Paul. She became very famous in Britain for the sanctity of her life ; and to her are dedicated those churches called Llandegley, in various parts of the principality of Wales. These three memoirs may be advantageously read in connection with each other.

THE

# HEROINES OF WELSH HISTORY;

OR,

## Memoirs of the Celebrated Women of Wales.

### PART THE THIRD.

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## DEETHGEE.\*

THE parentage of this lady of the fourteenth century is unknown, but from certain allusions in a poem addressed to her, by her illustrious lover, it appears she was of lowly rank, and humbly descended. Deethgee is one of those fair ones immortalized by the the muse of the celebrated Davyth ab Gwilym. To her praise be it added, she was as modest as beautiful, and appears to have rejected the suit and denied her company to a wooer whose lays and principles savoured too strongly of libertinism. That poet's biographer remarks, "whatever may have been the inconstancy of Davyth ab Gwilym in his general conduct towards the fair sex, he appears in two instances to have entertained a sincere and honourable passion—the object of which, under the names of Deethgee and Morvyth, he has celebrated in some of his choicest effusions. But, in both cases, the result was equally unpropitious, though in different ways, to the hopes he had indulged. The fair one first-named, who is represented by the bard as endowed with every grace both of body and mind, seems to have proved inaccessible to all the overtures of his heart, enforced as they were by all the fascinations of his muse.† However gratified she may have been by the offerings of the bard, she seems to have paid no attention to the adoration of the lover."

The following are extracts from the translation of Arthur James Johnes, Esq., barrister at law, the last biographer and editor of the poems of Davyth ab Gwilym :—

"Thou dear, perfect Deethgee—thou lamp of my heart !  
That rulest my thoughts with thy wiles and thy art :  
I am none of your lovers who gravely revere  
Ev'ry nobly-born damsel as stiff as a spear.

\* In Welsh written *Dyddgu*, but pronounced as above, the *g* being sounded as in *give*, *geer*, *gain*, &c.

† The poems, addressed to Deethgee, now extant are seven in number, from No. 14 to 20 inclusive in the original Welsh.

I leave the mad squirrel to clamber and climb  
 'Mid brushwood, and brambles, and branches sublime ;  
 The squirrel may scramble so high up the tree  
 That he cannot come down—but no climbing for me !  
 I leave the rash sailor the ocean to sweep,  
 With a puny inch plank between him and the deep ;  
 Let him rove till he tires o'er his perilous track,  
 A proverb of luck if he ever comes back.  
 The archer who aims at the target his blow,  
 Flings the dust from his arrow, the dust from his bow ;  
 And rarely he poises his arrow in vain,  
 If he aim but aright—if he shoot but with pain.  
 But, poor bard ! if one maiden but fall to his lot  
 In a thousand—alas, 'tis a more random shot !  
 Thou girl with the eyebrow so auburn and thin,  
 Thrice happy the man who thy beauty shall win ;  
 Thou wilt not be mine for abundance of song—  
 I know that thou wilt not—while thou art yet young :  
 But still I despair not, enchantress divine !  
 When nobody'll have thee, thou then shalt be mine."

In another poem he asks the roebuck to be his love-envoy to Deethgee, telling him he has nothing to fear from the hounds of the "tall baron;" that if they pursue him he may hide himself in the fern. He adds, that if he carries the love letter safe to Deethgee he will be rewarded. The following is a literal translation of a portion of this curious poem :—

"No hand shall flay thee ; thou shalt live in health and joy ;  
 Thy skin shall not be possessed by an old Saxon ;  
 Nor shall thy horns or thy hoofs  
 Fall to the lot of false Elithig.\*  
 Thou shalt be preserved against treachery,  
 With the strength of the arm of Cyhelyn.†  
 I will ever welcome thee,  
 Should I live to an old age—thou !  
 With horns like Eglantine."

But the most curious of all the poems addressed by the bard is the poem in which he invites her to a feast in the House of Leaves, namely, a bower in the grove, or forest. The viands with which he proposed to treat his lady-love were to be the nightingale's song, the sparkling mead, and the ena-

\* Jealousy—a name applied by the bards to their rivals.

† An ancient Welsh hero.

moured bard's caresses. Perhaps, deeming such fare too poetic, or too dangerous, the prudent Deethgee denied her presence on this occasion. Finding his suit unavailing, the poet appears to have given up the point, and with laudable philosophy transferred both his affections and the labours of his muse to another object, by whom they were more readily received. This was the celebrated Morvyth, a lady who, however pre-eminent in attractions, seems to have been far less fastidious than the modest and cautious fair one of our memoir. Deethgee's gentle tastes and retiring manners, evinced in her rejection of a lover whose principles were but too questionable, deserve the meed of applause. And however they may have doomed her to future obscurity, she doubtless met the reward of her virtues in the esteem and admiration of those better spirits, who are capable of preferring unostentatious goodness in the seclusions of life to the false glare of assumption and recklessness.

We shall conclude this scanty biographical notice by the insertion of the celebrated "House of Leaves" poem, before referred to, as translated by Arthur James Johnes, Esq.:—

"Maid of dark and glossy tresses,\*  
Humbly I request,  
In Dôl Aeron's† green recesses,  
Thee to be my guest  
At a feast—but not of food—  
Fit for a husbandman's repast,  
Or for Saxon‡—comrade rude!  
Not of flesh that might supply  
Nuptial festivity:  
Not of mingled wheat and rye,  
Meat to break a reaper's fast:  
On no other sweets we'll feed  
Than the nightingale and mead!  
In that room above thy head,  
Birchen boughs their shelter spread—

\* There appears some confusion in the description of this beauty; in another poem he says "thou girl with the eyebrow so anburn and thin."

† Aeron is a river in Cardiganshire; Dôl Aeron, or Dôl yr Aeron, implies a meadow on the bank of Aeron.

‡ Gluttony is a vice generally ascribed to the English of those days, who were termed Saxons by their Welsh neighbours.



Beauteous spot of fairest ground  
 For the deer to range around,  
 For grey philomel's clear wall,  
 And the thrush's wild, merry tale.

There nine trees together stand,  
 Mid the woods (oh, lovely band !)  
 Twined into a bright retreat  
 For the birds of heaven to meet,  
 Forming round our leafy seat  
 On the earth a circle fair—  
 A green steeple in the air—  
 And below a glorious hall,  
 Made of golden trefolls all.  
 Noble arbour—verdant nook—  
 For the maid of modest look ;  
 House by bright, clear waters piled—  
 Waters ne'er by smoke defiled,  
 Place of ecstasy and song,  
 Of tall trees and tangled ground ;  
 There the ousels rear their young,  
 There a fortress may be found—  
 Verdant turrets that enclose  
 Faithful lovers from their foes !  
 Wilt thou then, or wilt thou not,  
 Visit me in that blest spot ?  
 For thyself thou must declare,  
 Come—thou must—and meet me there.”

But come she did not—and in consequence of her refusal, it seems, there ended their intercourse, as this was his last poem addressed to this prudent beauty.

## EMMA DOLBEN,

WIFE OF THE REV. DR. HUGH WILLIAMS, RECTOR OF LLAN-  
TRISANT, ANGLESEA, AND ANCESTRESS OF NUMEROUS  
GREAT FAMILIES IN NORTH WALES.

THIS lady, like Catherine Tudor of Berain, lives in her descendants more than in her own proper person; and to those who feel an interest in the origin of certain great families of North Wales, the little that is to be gleaned about her will doubtless be very acceptable. While on his professional tour, like Dr. Syntax, in search of the picturesque, at Penrhôs, in Anglesea, "the agreeable seat of Lady Stanley," Edward Pugh, author and illustrator of "*Cambria Depicta*," collected the following account of her:—

"Lady Stanley has now in her possession a portrait of Emma Dolben, her great grandmother, of which the annexed plate is a faithful copy.\* This lady was daughter of John Dolben, of Caegwnnion, near Denbigh, Esq., from the same origin as Dr. David Dolben, bishop of Bangor, in 1631, and Sir William Dolben, Bart., late M.P. for Oxford. She married, about 1650, the Rev. Hugh Williams, D.D., rector of Llantrisant and Llanrhyddlad in Anglesea, second son of William Williams, of Chwaen Isav and Nautanog, in the same county, Esq. By this lady (not less remarkable for her worth and accomplishments, than for the rank, affluence, and respectability of her numerous descendants) Dr. Williams had issue, Sir William Williams, solicitor general and speaker of the House of Commons in 1684, ancestor of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Bart. Sir John Williams, of Bodlewyddan, Bart., and the late Watkin Williams, of Penbedw, Esq., M.P., for the borough of Flint, and Emma,

\* She appears a handsome, stately, taper-waisted, grandly attired lady, worthy of her illustrious position. Vide Pugh's *Cambria Depicta*, p. 62.

the lady of Sir Arthur Owen, Bart., ancestor of Sir Hugh Owen of Orielton and Bodowen, Bart. The Viscount Bulkeley is also fifth in descent from Emma Dolben, by Emma, the wife of William Roberts, of Caerau, Esq., and in the same degree Holland Griffith, of Carreg-lwyd, Esq., by Emma, daughter of John Owen, of Penrhôs, Esq., great grandfather to Lady Stanley." The last named gentleman was buried in the church of Holyhead, in which the inscription on his tomb appears to be the only thing remarkable. It runs thus. "In memory of John Owen, of Penrhôs, Esq., a person, who having never travelled for education beyond the circuit of his native island—yet, by the singular felicity of his genius, attained to such accomplishments as to be its greatest delight and ornament, for wit; its chief oracle, for civil prudence; a stranger to few parts of useful learning; and that which excelled all, a great pattern of unaf-fected piety—died at the age of eighty-four, 1712."

Thus it is undeniable that Emma Dolben, or rather Mrs. Hugh Williams, is more than commonly honoured in the number and high respectability of her far-spreading descendants.\*

\* One of her sons, as before-mentioned, was the talented and witty Sir William Williams, who so reputably filled high offices in the state. While yet a noteless, if not a briefless barrister, he paid his addresses to the daughter of a man of rank and fortune. On being questioned by him as to his possessions and pretensions to ally himself so honourably, he replied—"I have a gown, a wig, and a tongue!" The gallant inference was understood and accepted. This bold barrister successively won the lady—the honour of knighthood at the hand of his sovereign—the solicitor-generalship and the speakership of the House of Commons, in the reign of James II.

## DOLLY OF PENTREATH.

DOLLY PENTREATH, a woman of the humbler walks of life, is celebrated in Cornish annals as *the last of the Britons* in that county who spoke the Cornish language, and for the great age at which she arrived before her death. Her surname, *Pentreath*, which is a corruption of the British or Welsh word *Pentraeth*, must have been derived from the place of her residence, and properly written in pure Welsh would have been *Dolly o'Ben y traeth*, and in English *Dolly of Strand-head*.

The following brief notice of this last animated relic of the Cornish Britons, we transcribe from that beautiful and most interesting work "*Cyrus Redding's Illustrated Itinerary of the County of Cornwall*," where she is incidentally introduced in a dissertation on the decline and extinction of the British language in that county.

*"In the death of a language there is something painfully striking—as being the medium through which, for perished ages, perished generations of men communicated alike wants the most trivial, or the thoughts that wander through eternity.\** There are no printed books in the Cornish tongue. Dr. Moreman, of Menheniot, in the reign of Henry VIII., was the first who taught his parishioners the "*Lord's Prayer*" in English. In 1640, at Feock, near Truro, the sacrament was administered in Cornish, and the Rev. Mr. Robinson, near the Lizard Point, preached in Cornish in 1768. In 1700, the language was still spoken by the tanners and fish-people of St. Just and the western side of Mount's Bay. Borlase said that, in 1758, it had ceased to be spoken; but,

\* This touching reflection, written in a pure style of sublime simplicity, cannot but come home, doubly charged with pathetic reference, to the bosom of every Welchman or Celt—descendant as he is of the earliest colonisers of Europe—and whose language, notwithstanding every effort made or making for its support or revival, is also on the eve of extinction. To the utilitarian, whose creed and mental aspirations favour nothing but progress, this, of course, is "*a consummation devoutly to be wished*;" but to the philosopher, or profound meditator on the wreck of nations and the general mutability of human affairs, not the less interesting, or intensely affecting—however deeply he may participate in warm wishes for the success of progression, and ardently desire the removal of every prejudice that proves a stumbling-block in the way of advancement.

ten years after that, two old women of Mousehole understood, according to Daines Barrington, what was said by a neighbour called Dolly Pentreath, than whom they were ten or twelve years younger. This woman, commonly reputed the last who could speak Cornish, was in her eighty-seventh year in 1773, but would frequently walk three miles out and home the same morning. One William Bodener, in 1776, could write both Cornish and English; and he stated that four or five others then lived who could speak the language. John Nancarrow, of Marazion, learned the language in his youth. Mr. Polwhele says, that this William Bodener, of Mousehole, was many years younger than Dolly Pentreath, and used to converse with her. He died in 1794, and left two sons, but neither knew enough of the language to converse in it." Thus it seems he survived her six years, by which he deprived this heroine of popular tradition of a portion of her peculiar laurels; as Dolly Pentreath is recorded to have died, in 1778, at the great age of one hundred and two years. Our author continues, "she was buried very humbly, in St. Paul's churchyard, near Penzance, where some ignorant writers have given her both a tomb and an epitaph." Mr. Tompson, an engineer of Truro, who had made the old Cornish language his study, wrote the following epitaph upon Dolly, which he circulated among his friends—hence the tale of a tombstone that never honoured her remains :—

Old Doll Pentreath, one hundred aged and two,  
 Deceas'd and buried in Paul parish too,—  
 Not in the church with people great an high,  
 But in the churchyard doth old Dolly lie.\*

The work from which we have quoted this account, among its numerous interesting engravings, is embellished with a characteristic likeness of Dolly Pentreath, "from a drawing made by an inhabitant of Penzance, who died about the close of the last century."

\* For the amusement of those who may take pleasure in comparing the original with the Cambro British, we subjoin the Cornish version of this epitaph, which runs thus :—

"Coth Doll Pentreath cans ha deau;  
 Marow ha kledyz ed Paul plén :  
 Na ed an eglos, gwn pobel brás,  
 Bes ed eglos-hay, coth Dolly es."



## ELYN DONE, OR ELLEN DWN,

DAUGHTER OF SIR JOHN DONE OF UTKINTON, IN CHESHIRE—A  
MAID, TWICE A WIFE, AND A WIDOW THE SAME DAY.

ADDITIONALLY to the interest connected with the strange details of this lady's life, this well authenticated narrative cannot fail to excite the curiosity of all readers, when they are informed that it is the presumed original on which Sir Walter Scott founded his admirable ballad of *THE YOUNG LOCHINVAR*. In whatever degree of approval the general reader may regard that beautiful production, we cannot conceive that the eminent author of it would have lost a single leaf of his superabundant laurel wreath, had he done Wales the justice of acknowledging the foundation on which he has reared so elegant a superstructure. But so it is; these Welsh incidents have been *Scotchified*, without the slightest reference to their Cambrian origin.

The principal interest of this memoir, notwithstanding, lies in the matter-of-fact romance of this extraordinary story; wherein the transactions of the entire life of its heroine are compressed into the adventures of a single day; yet in that eventful day was enfranchised such subtle essence, as in the hands of a capable artist, has frequently expanded into the five long acts of the drama, or the three ample volumes of the modern romance or novel.

Elyn Done, the lady of this memoir, was the daughter of Sir John Done, and resided with her parents at Utkinton, in the county of Chester. Her affections had been won by a Welsh gentleman named David Myddelton, but her parents were strongly opposed to their union, and determined on having her married to her cousin Richard Done, of Croten, in their own immediate neighbourhood. This relative, however, Elyn held in absolute aversion—repulsed his advances, refused his offered hand and heart, ultimately denied her presence to him, and made no secret of her partiality for his rival David Myddelton.

To understand the secret spring of the hostility manifested by the parents of Ellen to the honourable match with Myddelton, it will be necessary to take the following parti-

culars into consideration. Although residing in England, and aiming to be considered as English, it appears that this family was originally Welsh—that following the bias of their taste or policy, they had crossed the river Dee, and settled within the English territories. Like many others of their countrymen, finding their fortunes thriving there under more favouring influences than in the land of their birth, they finally made themselves English subjects, and Anglofied their family name of Dwn into Done—in later times usually written Dunn. Thus, according to the policy which guided their actions, to give their daughter in marriage to a native of the country they had abandoned and repudiated, appeared to them as a retrograde movement highly reprehensible and opposed to their English partialities and interests. Without this explanation their rejection of a person so highly respectable as David Myddelton for a son-in-law would appear unaccountable. But it appears they neither considered his identity with the elevated family of the Myddeltons of Chirk Castle, his descent from the ancient tribe of Ririd Vlaidd, nor the high office which he held under the reigning sovereign Edward IV., of sufficient weight to alter their resolution of marrying their daughter to their kinsman Richard Done of Croten. These were the high days of paternal tyranny, when those absolute authorities were impressed with the most extreme notions of their own divine rights in the disposal of the hands, hearts, and fortunes of their offspring—and of the obligation of passive obedience on the part of those children, to whom they assigned whatever partners that suited with their policy, caprice, or a prior arrangement, formed often during the very infancy of the parties principally concerned. The heroism or audacity of the mind had not yet conceived the heresy of doubting, much less of questioning this “right divine.” Even the suffering subjects of the tyrannical system stood self-condemned, and in their deliberative moods concluded their reluctance to obedience to be criminal; and in their superstitious awe, yielded to the most unreasonable decrees, more as repentant criminals than the victims of the most degrading and mind-enslaving rigour. From this state

of culpability, the milder minds, harrassed to imbecility, were soon persuaded by those perpetual panders to erratic authority, the priesthood, their spiritual guides, who alone possessed the talisman of tranquilizing disturbed nerves, as well as consciences, by the imposing necromancy (for the the imposture deserves no better term) of absolution, obtained only by obedience.

Repulsed by the parents of Elyn, David Myddelton rarely beheld his beloved mistress—and, when he did so, it was only at a distance while vigilantly guarded during her devotions at church. However, it would seem, he consoled himself with a firm-rooted conviction of possessing her entire affections. With this assurance, to avoid compromising her domestic peace, it is probable he avoided making a too conspicuous display of his presence, and with manly patience waited the eventful births of time, doubtless, looking anxiously for the period, when with her own consent he should forcibly remove her from the paternal dwelling and protection into his own. That time, so long looked for, at length came, but attended with circumstances more terrible than ever could have been anticipated by either of the parties who stood as principals in the adventure.

It is very probable that Sir John and his lady, availing themselves of every circumstance tending to work on their daughter's mind, to bend it to their views, might instance to her the infrequency of her lover's appearance at the church as a proof of his waning affection, a presumption that he held her in light regard, and the probability that he had abandoned all further thoughts of her. Discovering the effect of such an insinuation as touching her woman's pride at fancying herself slighted, or held over cheap, nothing could be more natural than that they should seize the opportunity thus presented of extorting from her a promise, that unless he appeared there to claim her by a certain day, that she should consent to give up all further thoughts of him, and marry her cousin Richard Done of Croten. That, yielding for a moment to the bitter thought of his faithlessness, unconscious of, or forgetting at the same time, the generous motives that induced him to forego his devotional



visits, and to absent himself so long—and forgetting also the distance of his home, at the castle of Denbigh, in the vale of Clewyd, from her own on the English side of the river Dee, it is by no means improbable that Elyn, in her transient resentment, and in the hope of obtaining a temporary peace from the incessant persecution of her family, might be induced to yield such a conditional promise—little thinking that it was within the compass of possible events that she would ever be called upon to ratify this compact by an absolute fulfilment.

Greatly alarmed, and intensely troubled on reflection, at the consequence of her weakness, a strong conviction of her peril flashed across her mind, as the insidiousness of the insinuations which had betrayed her into such unfounded fears, and the consequent advantage taken of her, the moment she became ensnared in the meshes of her circumventers, the thought of extricating herself succeeded her first convulsive emotions. She soon decided on a resolute attempt to rescue herself from the consequence of her imprudence, by sending off a secret and well-instructed messenger to Denbigh castle to inform Myddelton of her dangerous position, emphatically impressing her conviction that her stern parents would enforce the conditions of her fatal promise the moment that time and inauspicious circumstances placed it in their power.

Most unfortunately David Myddelton was absent when Elyn's messenger arrived at Denbigh, and several days elapsed before he was found. At length, however, the astounding intelligence reached him that not a moment was to be lost or the beloved mistress of his heart would be estranged to him for ever.

Distressed beyond measure at the details of the trusty messenger, the unhappy young man could well conceive in what manner her ungenerous parents had put such evil constructions on his self-denying, prolonged absence, and the momentary doubt of his truth which betrayed Elyn into her grievous mistake. He could mentally see how their incessant entreaties, threats, and other importunities, had driven the poor girl into a reluctant confused consent to

abandon him—and his active fears suggested that at that very moment they might be enforcing the forfeited conditions—for, he remembered with agony, this was the fatal morning fixed for the marriage of Elyn with her hated cousin—and that the belated morning was so far advanced, that to arrive at Utkinton in time to rescue her was next to impossible. Rendered desperate with such convictions, and stung with self-reproach for not having foreseen and anticipated those evils, and prevented the possibility of the event he dreaded, he was now for flying to her rescue.

Ever more ready for action than deliberate reflection David Myddelton immediately decided on the course to pursue, and rapidly commenced putting his intentions into execution. He raised the most resolute of his friends, whose homes were nearest his own, and each being well armed with goodly weapons and mailed breast plates—and mounted on strong, fleet, and vigorous steeds, off rode the resolute cavalcade, to the number of a couple of dozen, with the fiery lord of Denbigh at their head.

In the meantime poor Elyn's state of mind was troubled in the extreme. With renewed confidence she believed to the last that the timely arrival of her favoured lover would save her from the extremity she dreaded, and put an end to her peril and misery by a sudden transition from despondence to the height of mortal felicity. Guarded in her chamber, and strictly watched, she spent those feverish, miserable hours in gazing from her lattice, while daylight lasted, for the sight of some being to relieve her hopes—and in the darkness of the night listened so intently for some indicating sound of a strange arrival, that the beating of her own heart, in the wildness of her imagination, was exaggerated into the tramping of approaching horses. But, as these delusions vanished, it was with heart-crushing anguish she beheld, unrelieved, the arrival of the bridal morning, and with it the detested bridegroom and his party, whom she was compelled to accompany to the altar, while in her frantic despair she wished every moment the last of her existence.

With all the incredible exertions of David Myddelton and his friends to reach Utkinton in time to frustrate the



schemes of his enemies, unfortunately, from the lateness of the intelligence he had received, he utterly failed to get there till he heard, with the utmost consternation, that the bridal party had been in church a considerable time. Almost frantic on discovering this state of things, while his followers kept in their saddles wandering what would be his next movement, he was seen to spring from his horse and pace to and fro in violent agitation. Before he had taken many turns he was roused by the merry peals of the "marriage bells," while the wedding party were seen issuing from the porch of the church, preceded by the bride and bridegroom. No sooner were his eyes fixed on the melancholy bride, mechanically holding by the arm of the smirking, insignificant-looking Richard Done, who strutted forward in all the triumphant pride of a bridegroom, than he turned deadly pale; but, all at once, as if suddenly possessed of the maddened spirit of a raging demon, the impetuous blood of the race of Ririd Vlaidd\* seemed boiling in his veins. His sword was in his grasp, and seen flying from its scabbard as he rushed on the unhappy bridegroom, and rapid as the lightning flash thrust him through the heart. While the astounded guests and witnesses of the wedding seemed petrified at this tragic catastrophe, David Myddelton whisked off the now widowed bride towards his party, who, with their drawn swords, closed around them; he lifted her on his horse, and vigorously sprung into the saddle before her. In the greatest excitement David voiciferated the energetic monosyllable "on!" and, taking the lead himself, in an instant the whole party were in a violent gallop on their homeward course. Dashing their horses into the river Dee, they urged them forward, at the peril of being carried away by the rapidity of the powerful stream—yet, fortunately, imitating the caution intermingled with the daring of their leader, they waded and swam the sagacious, sure-footed animals, and got every one safe over without a single failure. Now secure within their native Cambrian territory, in brief space they were gently riding up the vale of Clewyd, where, at the abbey of Denbigh, Elyn became again espoused—but at this time in ties more enduring than those of the morning

\* Ririd Vlaidd signifies the bloody wolf.

wedding. Thus was the gentle daughter of Sir John Done, in one brief day—the most terrible, if not the happiest of her existence, a maid, a bride, a widow, and again a wife.

As the principal object, for the satisfaction of the public, is to establish the authenticity of the above incidents, it behoves us to produce our vouchers—which, though liable to the charge of repetition, we shall render in our text, instead of the general mode of casting such valuable documents into the notes or the appendix. Be it known then, that the world, including the illustrious author of "The Young Lochinvar" and the present biographer, originally stand indebted to the researches of the indefatigable Pennant for the story of this wild abduction—thus given in his "North Wales Tours :"—

"In rummaging over the papers of this house (the house of Gwaenynog, the respectable family seat of the Middeltons)\* I met with an anecdote of it too singular to be suppressed. It will prove, at least, that private morals and respect to the laws were, in that distant period, but in a very low state, for no notice seems to be taken of so atrocious an offence. The criminal enjoyed the favour of the crown in common with others of its peaceful subjects.

"David Myddelton, who is styled Receiver of Denbigh in the 19th of Edward IV., and Valechis Coronæ Dni Regis in the 2nd of Richard III., made his addresses to Elyn, daughter of Sir John Done of Utkinton, in Cheshire, and gained the lady's affections, but the parents preferred their relation Richard Done, of Croten. The marriage was accordingly celebrated, which David having notice of, watched the groom leading his bride out of church, killed him on the spot, and then carried her away his mistress and married her the same day, so that she was a maid, widow, and twice a wife, in one day."†

\* Situated near Denbigh, in the vale of Clewyd.

† Pennant here adds, "from Roger, the eldest son of this marriage, descended the Myddeltons of Gwaenynog." This author incidentally states what cannot but prove singularly interesting as a more general feature in Celtic characteristics than was generally known. "I mention Thomas Myddelton; another of his progeny, only to prove that the custom of the Irish bowl, or Scotch coranich, was in use among us (the Welsh); for we are told he was buried 'cum magno dolore et clamore cognatorum et propinquorum omnium.'"

## DRWYNWEN,

FIFTH DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG, WIFE OF CYN-  
VARCH-OER, AND MOTHER OF URIEN RHEGED.

DRWYNWEN (white nose), the fifth daughter of Brychan, became the wife of Cynvarch-oer (Kynvarch the cold); he was the son of Meirchion cûl-galed (Meirchion the slender and hardy), a chieftain of the North of England. Many of the sisters of this lady became the mothers either of martyrs, saints, or founders of monastic establishments, in the primitive days of British christianity. But, in contradistinction to them, Drwynwen gave birth to a wonderful boy, who in the course of time won the fame of a hero and became the munificent patron of the greatest bards on record—no less a personage than the celebrated Urien Rheged; and his twin-sister, the beautiful Eirddil. He flourished about the year 560. Urien was of high celebrity, in the court of king Arthur, as a most valiant and courteous knight. He gained the surname of Rheged, from the small northern kingdom to which he was elected as sovereign, which in after time was called *Gwlad y Cymru*, then Cumbria—and latterly Cumberland. Many notices may be found of him in "Evans's Specimens of Welsh Poetry," as well as in the British Triads; he was the most famous of all the kings of Cumbria, being the Urbgen of the additions to Nennius; and in his court flourished the three great poets Aneurin, Taliesin, and Llywarch-hên. The second, in poems that are still extant, enumerates twelve pitched battles fought by Urien; that of Argoed Llwyvain, or Elmwood, is particularly described, it was fought with Flamddwyn, or flame-bearer, as, for his destructive mode of warfare, the Britons called Ida, the first king of Northumberland."\*

\* Theophilus Jones.

## DWYNWEN,

THE TWENTY-SIXTH AND YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN.

"DWYNWEN,\* the youngest daughter of Brychan, according to the MS. in the British Museum, though omitted by Llewelyn Ofeiriad, was a saint of such celebrity that the shade of Davyth ab Gwilym, frowning while I hesitate, imperiously requires me to notice her, as some atonement for the silence of Llewelyn the priest. A church, from her called Llanddwyn, was built and dedicated to this saint, in the Isle of Anglesea, in the year 590. She has been called the Welsh Venus, or goddess of love. The amatory poet of Wales, Davyth ab Gwilym, addresses her, "holy Dwy-nwen, goddess of love, daughter of Brychan." He has also poem or invocation to Dwy-nwen, a translation of which is inserted in "Jones's Reliques of the Welsh Bards." Her shrine was much resorted to by desponding swains and love-sick maidens of olden times, who entreated her propitious smiles, and solicited her intercessions and good offices with the objects of their affections.

"These garlands, ever green, and ever fair,  
With vows were offered, and with solemn pray'r,  
A thousand altars in temple smoked;  
A thousand bleeding hearts her power invoc'd."

We leave to future commentators the task of reconciling these mixtures of heathen and christian rites and references, nor envy them their laurels—having merely transcribed these notices from the pages of Theophilus Jones's "History of the Town and County of Brecon."

\* The meaning of this name is rather curious—*Dwyn* signifies to carry, to bear, also to steal—and *wen* white. Thus the name implies that she was the bearer off, or stealer, of the palm of fairness.

## ELEANOR DE MONTFORD,

QUEEN OF PRINCE LLEWELYN AB GRIFFITH, THE LAST NATIVE  
SOVEREIGN OF THE WELSH.

ELEANOR DE MONTFORD, niece to King Henry III,\* and daughter of that powerful nobleman and great soldier Simon de Montford, earl of Leicester, had been betrothed to prince Llewelyn ab Griffith at an early age. Although Llewelyn became most passionately attached to her, yet it would seem that he had also consulted his own interest in allying himself to the family of this potent English baron. Simon de Montford was one of the most astonishing characters of the age. When the violent conduct of Henry and his ministers had driven many of the English barons into open revolt, he was unanimously chosen for their general; and well did he justify their election. In the year 1264, and the forty-seventh of the reign of Henry III., he won the battle of Lewes, when the fortune of war threw that monarch and his son Edward (afterwards the celebrated King Edward I.) prisoners into his power. Although history has sufficiently blazoned the ultimate successes and triumphs of Edward, so disastrous to his foes and glorious to himself, yet the records of his nation testify that there was a time when he shared his father's disgrace, as the beaten in the field and humbled captive of the earl of Leicester. Doubtless it was a humiliating epoch in their lives, when the subdued sovereign and his haughty son were paraded through the land, as pageants of state, to suit the triumph of a rebel subject—and at the same time compelled to sanction by their presence the proceedings of their conqueror, who in reality had overthrown the power of his prince. But

\* Her father Simon de Montford espoused Eleanor, dowager of William earl of Pembroke, and sister to Henry the third. Matthew Paris, p. 314.



great as was the power of de Montford, this order of things was not to last. Warrington says, "Sir Roger Mortimer, and the other lords engaged in the royal cause, expecting to be attacked by Simon de Montford, had broken down the bridge of Worcester and having destroyed the ferryboats on the Severn, they encamped on the opposite banks of the river. These precautions prevented the earl of Leicester from penetrating farther than Worcester. The entrance into the country was soon opened by Llewelyn, his friend and ally—who, by a sudden inroad upon the English borders, diverted the attention and weakened the operations of the lords of the marches. The confederate army, under the command of the two leaders (de Montford and Llewelyn) having left prince Edward a prisoner in the city of Hereford, ravaged the estates of Sir Roger Mortimer, and taking the castles of Hay and Ludlow, proceeded to Montgomery. An admonitory bull was issued by Ottobani, the pope's legate, to the Welsh prince, requiring him to restore the castles which he had taken, and to withdraw from the confederacy. This mandate did not produce the desired effect. The lords of the marches therefore yielding to a superior force, and desirous of obtaining the liberty of prince Edward, submitted to the earl of Leicester. They agreed to surrender to him their estates and their castles, and to relinquish the realm for one year. Soon after this treaty, in the year 1265, a general peace was concluded between Llewelyn and the earl of Leicester with the king and lords of the marches, at a conference which they held for that purpose at Hereford."

We have drawn thus largely on general history merely to show under what circumstances the earl of Leicester sought a lasting alliance with Llewelyn, to be cemented by a matrimonial union between his daughter and the prince of Wales; wherein we must again cite the authority of Warrington, who has well availed himself of the lights cast on these transactions by the chroniclers of the times.

"Dissatisfied, no doubt, with the late peace, prince Edward, who since his captivity had resided in the English court in Hereford, escaped out of the power of the earl of Leicester. The young prince was instantly joined by the

lords of the marches, who, recovering the possession of their own fortresses, made themselves masters of the country between Hereford and Chester. By a sudden and rapid movement of the enemy Leicester found himself surrounded by different bodies of troops. In this situation he had no other resource than to throw himself into the arms of Llewelyn."

It is to be observed that while Simon de Montford was ostensibly fighting in the king's name against that monarch's enemies, having Henry, with his court, the captives of his camp, to verify his proceedings, he was in reality fighting his own and confederates' battles against the king's ministers and their partizans. Much in the manner that in a later age the audacious Bolingbroke treated the imbecile Richard II., the bold and wily Leicester bore himself towards Henry; with loyalty on his lip and determination in his heart to brave his resentment, and compel him to the course which he had marked out for him to follow. With a full understanding of the earl's position, and the personal peril in which he then stood, Llewelyn dexterously treated with him as if he were the king's authorized and chosen official. The prince of Wales "resolving to make every advantage of the present conjuncture, demanded, as the only condition of affording him protection, a full restitution to the inheritance and dignity of his ancestors. Under the sanction of the king's name, the sovereignty of Wales was restored to Llewelyn, with the homage of all the Welsh barons; he received a grant also of the lordship of Whittington, and the hundred Elesmere, with the castles of Hay, Hawarden, and Montgomery.\*"

These were the bright days of Llewelyn's existence. At the same time that he was admiring the youthful graces of the lady Eleanor, he had the supreme gratification of hearing her father's applause for the very able manner in which he had conducted his own affairs—and afforded to him, the efficient aid of arms in his dark hour of adversity. He had the proud satisfaction to hear, from the stern and haughty de Montford, a desire to strengthen their present union;

\* Warrington.

and to render their future friendship indissolubly lasting, he received from him the offer of the hand of his daughter. Such an offer, under circumstances so flattering, of course was rapturously accepted by the prince of Wales; and being then too young for marriage, Eleanor was formally betrothed to him accordingly.

Strange reverses followed soon after. From the very height crowned with the sunshine of good fortune, both the earl of Leicester and the prince of Wales had to endure a sudden descent, rapid as unforeseen, into the gulph of gloom and disaster. To dilate circumstantially on the historical events which subsequently took place, is no part of our plan further than relates to the fortunes of Eleanor de Montford. The release of king Henry, by the successful effort of his son and adherents, was followed by the reverses of the earl of Leicester; and although again succoured by Llewelyn, his inauspicious star seemed to gain the ascendant. To crown the evil fortune of Llewelyn and his betrothed with tenfold darkness, in that same year (1265), the war-worn, spirit-crushed Simon de Montford departed this life; to the joy of his enemies, and the irreparable loss of his friends. On the death of her father, Eleanor de Montford was sent to join her mother and brother, and to finish her education at a nunnery in France. Without dwelling on the momentous public events which followed, we may summarily notice the submission of the malcontent barons to king Henry, and the union of all parties against Llewelyn, to punish him for the assistance which he had rendered to Simon de Montford. Although he necessarily suffered, the prince survived the storm, and by the mediation of Ottobani, the pope's legate, obtained peace on fairer terms than could have been expected. The death of his old antagonist Henry III. took place in 1273; but he found a more relentless and determined adversary in his son who succeeded. The commencement of the reign of Edward I. was marked by the unfriendly bearing of that monarch towards Llewelyn ab Griffith, manifested by vexatious and irritating demands of his personal presence to do him homage as his superior lord; at the same time refusing the prince the customary hostages for his secu-



city.\* This insolent and barefaced denial justified Llewelyn in his refusal to quit his dominions and to risk his safety in the territories of a monarch so hostile to him.

"This refusal was rendered still more disagreeable to Edward, as he was likely to be deprived of another fruit of vassalage; for Llewelyn seemed at this time determined to solemnize his marriage with Eleanor de Montford, though he had not obtained the king's consent. The pope likewise appeared so sensible of the justice of his plea that he inhibited the archbishop of Canterbury from issuing any papal censure against Llewelyn. When the nature of his situation is considered, the caution of the Welsh prince was justified upon the principle of self-preservation. In the bosoms of the two princes, jealousy and hatred had long mingled with the love of glory and the desire of dominion: David and Roderic, the younger brothers of the prince of Wales, were entertained in the court of England: many Welsh chieftains also, who had fled from the justice of their country, were under the protection of Edward—and, influenced by every motive of hope and despair, must have been anxious to promote the destruction of their sovereign. Llewelyn, likewise, too well remembered the fate of his father Griffith,† to place any confidence in the protection or honour of the English. He surely then, when interest and hatred conspired his ruin, would have been guilty of folly and rashness in the extreme, if he had hazarded a life, of such importance to his country, on no better security than the courteous ideas of the age, or the fluctuating principles of political integrity."‡

After this, Llewelyn was successively summoned to Shrewsbury, and to appear before the parliament sitting at Westminster, to do homage to Edward, with which demands he refused compliance on the same grounds which he had heretofore alleged. Edward summoned him next to do him

\* The pledges which Llewelyn demanded were Edmund, the king's brother, the earl of Gloucester, and the chief justice of England.

† For the particulars of which, see *Memoirs of the Princess Sinal* in this work.

‡ Warrington.

homage at Chester, which, with three other similar demands, met the like rejection. To justify these refusals still more to the clergy and to the world, Llewelyn sent a memorial,\* by the abbots of Conway and Strata Florida, to be delivered into the hands of the archbishops of York and Canterbury, and of other bishops who were then assembled in convocation. There is a native simplicity which runs through the whole of this memorial, reciting his grievances, and justifying his conduct, which pleads more ably the cause of the Welsh prince than could have been effected by the exercise of the finest talents.

The tenor of Edward's conduct with respect to Llewelyn did not delude the sagacity of that prince. He saw that a blow was meditating by the English king, which, though suspended for a time, would be the more severe, and would fall with greater weight upon his country, from the coolness, the delay, and increasing power of that firm and ever prudent monarch.

Llewelyn, therefore, thought it prudent at this time, to fulfil an engagement which he had formerly made; and to enter into an alliance with a family which might yield him support against the formidable power of his rival. In the course of the late war (as before related) he had been betrothed to Eleanor, the daughter of Simom de Montford, and cousin to king Edward. On the death of her father the young lady had retired into the monastery of Montargis, in France. In this court her mother, the countess of Leicester, and her brother, the heir of the family, lived in great splendour. The adherents of the house of Montford were still powerful in England, and the fame of the English monarch had made him the object of jealousy with the French king. To unite the views of the two parties in support of his interest, which happily coincided with his ardent affection for the lady Eleanor, now matured into womanly beauty, the prince of Wales demanded of the king of France the daughter of the late earl of Leicester. Philip, with much facility granted his request; and Llewelyn waited with impatient expectation of his bride. But the pleasing ideas which the pros-

\* See appendix, No. II, to Warrington's history of Wales.



country prevailed, and Llewelyn rejected the proposal with disdain. Upon which the two princes proceeded in their preparations for war.”\*

The immense disproportion between the means in the hands of Edward and of Llewelyn might give a discerning eye the anticipated result of this unequal conflict. While the ranks of the English king were hourly swelled by the arrival of fresh powers, from the continent, from Scotland and Ireland, in addition to his own military vassals, the prince of Wales, without an ally, had the mortification to witness the defection of many of his own countrymen; it was at this critical time that Rhys ab Meredith, titular lord of South Wales, and other chiefs of that country, abandoned the cause of Llewelyn and consented to hold their lands of Edward. While the one was elated with his favourable prospects, it naturally follows that the other was depressed from opposite causes. Doubtless these unhappy presages weighed heavily on the mind of the Welsh prince, and disabled him from pursuing, with his wonted foresight and alacrity, the necessary precautions for the support of a great army. Like his predecessors, the Cambrian sovereigns of past times, Llewelyn fatally put his trust in the natural strength of his mountain barriers, deeming the fastnesses of Snowdon sufficient protection against the mightiest power that could confront him. But there was one enemy which he had overlooked, and against whom he had made no preparation—that dire enemy of armed multitudes, famine. The events to be expected speedily came to pass. “The prospect which opened to Llewelyn upon the mountains of Snowdon was dreary and desolate. His enemies were masters of the country below, and seemed determined, by their perseverance, to starve him into submission. The island of Anglesea, his usual resource for provisions, was then possessed by the English. No diversion could be made in his favour in South Wales, or in England, as the former country had lately submitted to Edward’s authority; and in the latter, the adherents of

\* Warrington.

the house of Montford were satisfied by having their forfeited estates restored. The distress of Llewelyn was heightened still more by the prospect of an immediate famine.

"Thus surrounded by dangers, he had no better alternative than to throw himself on the mercy of the English king. A magnanimous prince like Llewelyn, the freedom of his country being lost, would scarcely have wished to survive its ruin—if the sufferings of his people, crowding around him and perishing by famine, had not claimed his pity, and inclined him to hazard his own interests and personal safety from a tender regard to theirs. It is possible, too, the Welsh prince might hope that, in the event of some future day, he might again rise upon the wheel of fortune. In this state of affairs the prince of Wales sent to propose an accommodation with the king of England. There was little generosity or pity to be expected in the terms which would be offered by Edward."\*

The galling stipulations on which Llewelyn and his compatriots were relieved from present destruction, by want of the sustenance of existence, has been sufficiently shown and commented on in our national history, nor is it necessary to repeat them here. A ruined prince in the lowest abyss of despair, surrounded by many of the weaker sex, craving for the word that will give bread to their perishing young, could have but little disposition to remonstrate with an armed enemy of known remorselessness, who menaces him with immediate destruction unless he will embrace whatever terms he may choose to offer. Such being the position of Llewelyn, the most spirit-crushing advantage was taken of it by his adversary, by which he was reduced to dependence and degradation, accompanied by mortifications of the most painful description.

A peace, such as it was, followed! Edward entered London triumphantly, with Llewelyn in his train to do him the long-claimed homage. The rigorous and insupportable terms of this semblance of a peace proved the king of

\* Warrington.

England's determination to annex Wales to his dominions on the death of the prince of Wales; but he imagined there stood in his way the popular delusions said to be entertained by the Welsh, that king Arthur was yet alive, and destined to restore to them their ancient independence. To dissipate these superstitious ideas (if ever they were entertained), the English king, with his queen, court, and parliament, took up their residence at Glastonbury, and had the bones of the ancient Silurian hero disinterred and publicly exposed. With the barbarous view of insulting the sovereign of Wales, Llewelyn was summoned to appear, and witness this act of sacrilegious folly; but notwithstanding his adverse fortunes, and perilous position in offending the king of England, the prince of Wales had the spirit to deny his presence on the occasion.

"It is easy to conceive that Edward, alive to his interests, and jealous of his power, would be eager to check the contumacy of a vassal in Llewelyn's situation. To enforce his obedience, the king, attended by his queen, repaired to Worcester, from whence he sent an order to the Welsh prince to appear at his court, and to account for his late conduct. The rigour of this summons was softened by an invitation to a royal feast which was to be held in that city—with an assurance, too, that he should be treated with honour, and that the lovely Eleanor de Montford should be the reward of his obedience. There was a decision in this mandate which love would not suffer him to evade nor prudence to disobey, and which soon brought Llewelyn to the English court."\* The greatest of modern warriors has asserted, that to yield to the force of circumstances, the inevitable decrees of fate, is no stain on the fame of the war-worsted hero. If that be admitted in any case, Llewelyn stands excused to posterity for the humiliating homage which history records that he rendered to Edward on this occasion, which smoothed his path towards the possession of the long-sought lady of his love.

"Having now succeeded in his views, and as he thought, having rendered Llewelyn docile in the duties of vassalage,

\* Warrington.

Edward gave him back the hostages which he had lately received; and also delivered up to him Eleanor de Montford, with the estate which had been the property of her father. The marriage was celebrated on the 13th of October, in the year 1278, the expense of which was defrayed by Edward; and as a farther mark of his favour, the ceremony was graced by the presence of the king himself and his queen."

With what disgust must the conduct of Edward be viewed, for the ungenerous exaction recorded of him by the historian, in the passage following. Such was the ungraciousness of his nature that he could not help dropping poison into the sweet cup of nuptial benediction—and spreading gloom and mistrust on the day hallowed even among the humblest of mankind, and dedicated to unalloyed happiness, as the brightest in human life. But history itself shall give the loathsome statement.

"On the very day that the marriage was to be solemnized, and in consequence, as Llewelyn and his bride were going to hear mass, the English king required of that prince that he should enter into a covenant *never to protect any person whatever contrary to his pleasure*. The rigid sentiments of duty, put to so severe a trial, were too weak to subdue in the bosom of the Welsh prince the feelings of nature. Alive to love and its keen sensibilities, and *in fear, no doubt, for his liberty or life*, the firmness of the gallant Llewelyn sunk under their influence. The enamoured prince, besides conceding to *other requisitions*, signed a covenant, which loosened every tie of confidence, and which might in future give up to the resentment, or to the interested views of Edward, the most faithful adherent to his interests. It is only from a motive of personal dislike, for it could not have arisen from any just principle of policy, that we are able to account for the insult which was offered to Llewelyn—in detaining this lady so long in the English court, and impeding the views of honourable love. In these traits of Edward's character we see no traces of heroism—no resemblance of the courteous manners which distinguished the most cultivated period of the feudal ages.

"As soon as the ceremony was finished, Llewelyn with his amiable wife returned into Wales to sooth the asperity of adverse fortune in the enjoyment of domestic felicity."

But two years, two short years, were allotted to this unhappy prince, of connubial enjoyment, before he was overwhelmed with private sorrows, poignant and embittering as the public griefs which he had previously endured. In the year 1280, he had the inexpressible distress to lose his beloved wife, who died in child-bed. The liberties of his country already lost, and his people indignant at the concessions made to the grasping rapacity of the English king, there seemed nothing now to attach the bereaved prince of Wales to existence.

Llewelyn ab Griffith was the third of the princes of North Wales who had successively espoused English wives. When David, the son and successor of Owen Gwynedd, married Emma, daughter of Henry II., it was with the intent of occupying, in despite of his people, an usurped throne by the concurrence of the English king and the assistance of his army. But in these unworthy views he signally failed, and was hurled headlong from his height by the laudable efforts of a patriotic people, who restored the rightful line which had been disturbed by his usurpation. Llewelyn ab Iorworth following the same policy, on the death of his first wife, married Joan, the daughter of king John, whom, previous to the disgrace which put an end to her influence, was viewed more in the light of the disguised spy of England than the honoured wife of the prince of Wales. Remembering these things, it is but natural to expect that the people of Wales looked with abhorrence on these English alliances. Although exemplary in her own person, and blameless of any political bearing prejudicial to Wales, Eleanor de Montford, however dearly beloved by her husband for her beauty and worth, could scarcely be a favourite with the people at large. They must have remembered with bitterness the national sacrifices made by Llewelyn for the attainment of her hand; and willingly blind to her excellence of conduct, and known partiality for her adopted country,



rather rejoiced than grieved for her death—by which the last semblance of a friendly tie with England was snapped asunder. Had she lived longer, her influence with Edward could have availed nothing; nor could she, in the least, have averted those momentous events which speedily followed her decease. Those events are matters of history; a general reference to which is alone within the province of these memoirs.

In two years after the death of Eleanor de Montford, the fatal war (the termination of which sealed the destiny of Cambria) came to a sudden close by the death of Llewelyn ab Griffith, when followed the annexation of Wales as a province of the British empire.\*

\* That the final conquests of Wales and Scotland, and the union of all Britain under one sovereign, ultimately proved the greatest of blessings to a people, ever harassed by wars, public or intestine, which tore the vitals of these countries, is indisputable. But no thanks to the sinister calculators on booty, and blood-blinded actors in the awful drama. Though personally actuated by evil passions and selfish views, doubtless they were but the unconscious puppets which were worked by the great master-hand that ruled the universe for good, who thus mysteriously advanced the interests of a people capable of attaining the highest state of civilization and happiness. Surely we now can pause and ponder on the past without rancour. Let us hope that the respective descendants of the Saxons and the Celts can meet in social intercourse for better purposes than to twit each other with the crimes and cruelties of their ancestors; trusting a magnanimity of thought will ultimately teach us to concede all things to truth and kindness. It is a poor and small heart that can contain no more than its own immediate kindred, or people.

## GENERAL NOTES TO ELEANOR DE MONTFORD.

A writer in that excellent literary paper the *Bristol Mercury*, under the signature of HENGIST, has been at considerable pains in connecting the account of Eleanor's treacherous capture with the history of Bristol. However meritorious such a transaction may have appeared in the eyes of Edward I., and whatever glory the Bristolians of that day may have assigned to it, it redounds but little to their credit in the lights of a more liberal age that has learnt the wholesome art of forgetting the enmity of races. The treacherous manner in which the Bristol pilots ensnared the ship, and consigned a helpless woman into the power of her persecutor, deserves to rank as the first of the trio of stigmas on the fame of that city, perpetuated in their heraldic arms; the other two are more popularly known—the persecution to death of the poet Savage, and their flagrant neglect of their own poet Chatterton, thence driven to starvation, despair, and suicide. Had Savage been aware of the *chivalric act* commemorated by the ship and castle in the city arms, what a stern feature might it have formed in the vituperative pages of his "London and Bristol Compared!" The following is Hengist's account of this affair:—

"The circumstances of Eleanor's capture are most interesting, if, as Mr. Dallaway opines, they are the origin of the design engraved upon our Bristol seal. If our readers will regard the ship and castle which we have adopted as an emblem of the present series, to which we have appended the modern motto, partly for its brevity, and partly as a symbol that we connect modern ideas with ancient memorials, they will find, by comparison with well-known engravings, that the once-familiar legend is omitted. That legend runs thus—

"Secreti clavis sum portus. Navita navis

Portam custodit. Portum vigil indee prodit."

Which is thus translated by Mr. Dallaway—"I am the key of the secret port. The pilot steers the helm of the ship. The warder points out the port with his forefinger," and which he connects with Eleanor by the following suggestion.

"The vessel in which she was taken, he says, was discovered by pilots at the mouth of the Avon. The vessel was becalmed, and the pilots (*civics*) who were only four, according to Walsingham, induced the mariners, by promises of safety, to enter the harbour of Bristol, for it was not possible that they could have compelled them by actual force. *The surprise*, as it is termed by other chroniclers, consisted in the piloting of this ship, carrying, possibly, the marriage portion of the bride, with other splendid furniture, into the creek, or *secret port* of the castle, instead of the *open port* of the town; and there surrendering the prize into the hands of the king himself, who, it may be inferred, was at that time keeping his court within his castle of Bristol.

"It is surmised by Mr. Dallaway that the design of the seal commemorates this event to the credit of the townsmen. His conjecture, to say the least, is ingenious, and there are grounds, moreover, for believing it true. Mr. Dallaway carefully scrutinized the facts, and they seem to bear out his striking suggestion. If the register of the abbey of Kinsham, which he quotes as to the death of Eleanor, in 1279, the year after her marriage with Llewelyn, be correct, then a part of our own speculations must fall."

And *fall* they necessarily must, if Hengist is open to conviction, and lost the occasion for the pathetic allusion following:—"Llewelyn's head with a crown

of willow was placed on the gate of the tower of London, but Eleanor wore the willow in her heart." If so, it must have been *literally* planted on her grave, as her death occurred at the time and in the manner before stated.

The tendency of the next passage is very invidious and offensive to the nationality of our countrymen. It aims to prove that the final conquest of Wales was delayed—not by the valour of its patriotic and intrepid defenders—but from the forbearance of the Norman barons, who for selfish ends wished to keep it as a place of refuge when in rebellion against their own sovereigns.

"There are some excellent remarks, by the late George Ellis, respecting the independence of Wales, and the means by which it was preserved for so long. Pointing out, as he does, the comparative ease with which Edward the I. reduced it, while it had proved a continual rock of stumbling to his otherwise equally great predecessors, he accounts for it in this way: that the Norman barons had many of them an interest in preserving its freedom, and were not disposed to facilitate its submission. He hints that they made Wales a sort of sanctuary to which they fled when their liberty was in danger. Moreover, they obtained thence, if they pleased, volunteer armies to aid them in their projects. And we can so far verify his observations, that we have seen the earl of Gloucester and others thus making use of their British connections; and we may further add, the obscurity he complains of, as enveloping the history of Wales from the conquest, is illustrated best through the medium of Bristol. Bristol in fact, like Chester in the north, was the channel by which the races communicated."

In reference to one of the passages which runs, "*pointing out as he does the comparative ease with which Edward the I. reduced it, while it proved a continual block of stumbling to his otherwise equally great predecessors*;"—we may boldly demand who were they—the equally great predecessors of Edward?—certainly not the Conqueror William, who troubled himself but little about Welsh affairs—nor his barbarous son William Rufus—nor even Henry I., excepting Edward himself, the greatest and most dangerous of all the royal foes of Wales. Henry Beauchere, utterly failing to subdue the Welsh by force of arms, had recourse to the most unkingly mode of employing assassins to destroy the chiefs of the nation, and used the base chicanery of fomenting intestine broils among the people, to the end that they should butcher each other. In the reign of Stephen the terrible reaction which took place in Welsh military affairs enabled the natives of the principality utterly to destroy the power of the Norman barons in Wales, who were fairly beaten in battle, and ultimately the survivors of these sanguinary feuds were driven from all their castles beyond the Welsh boundaries. Henry II. certainly proved a very formidable foe to the Welsh. Richard Cœur de Lion kept aloof from them; John, ever restless in attempting conquests in Wales, met his match in the hard-fighting Llewelyn ab Iorworth, while Henry III. gained no laurels in his Welsh campaigns. Having now named all the English sovereigns from William the Conqueror to Edward the I. we are at a loss to discover the *equally great predecessors* of the latter prince in their battles with the mountaineers of Wales. Effectually to controvert the above assumptions of George Ellis, we have merely to direct our readers to the pages of Warrington which treat of the hostile occurrences during the periods in question. Be it remembered also, that the said historian of Wales always quotes his authorities, on all material statements—that he was an Englishman by birth and prejudices, and by no means an enthusiast in favour of Cambrian prowess, or Cambrian pretensions of any description.

## ELLEN OF THE MIGHTY HOST,

DAUGHTER OF EUDAV OR OCTAVIUS, LORD OF EWIAS, COUSIN  
OF CONAN MERIADOC, AND WIFE OF MAXIMUS THE ROMAN  
IMPERIAL USURPER.

"Ellen th' armipotent shines in our sphere."

Ellen the armipotent, otherwise distinguished in our Welsh records, the Triads, as Ellen of the mighty host, was — a celebrated woman of the fourth century, of the line of the Cornish Britons. In Roman and English annals she is called Helen, and Helena; but in Welsh always written Elen, and pronounced Ellen. She is often confounded with Helena, the daughter of Coel Godebrog, and mother of Constantine the Great. After our memoir of the latter lady, this heroine forms the succeeding link in the genealogical chain of the Roman-British government of our island.

Ellen was the daughter of a British chieftain named Eudav, but by the Roman writers designated Octavius, a man who played a very conspicuous part in the annals of his time. He was lord of a state called Ewias, and appears, to have been a very energetic and capable person, but very ambitious, intriguing, and unscrupulous as to the means by which he attained his desired ends. Previous to the departure from this island of Constantine and his mother, the personage whom he appointed to fill the high office of Roman governor of Britain was a British prince named Trahaiarn. But as the young emperor found it necessary to avail himself of the counsel and talents of this discreet Briton, he decided on taking him to the continent in his retinue, and to appoint Octavius to act as his deputy until Trahaiarn's return.

But it soon appeared that the father of the lady of this memoir was no less remarkable for great abilities than for the most grasping and insatiable ambition. While fulfilling

his deputed functions as imperial lieutenant, he soon usurped a supreme royal authority in this country, which, however, he ruled with wisdom and moderation. When the tidings of these occurrences reached Constantine, although deeply engaged in enforcing his claim to the imperial diadem, he despatched Trahaiarn with three Roman legions to subdue the usurper, and resume his original office. Octavius gave him battle soon after he landed, the result of which was the signal defeat of his opponent, at a place called Maes Urien, near Winchester. Finding he had to deal with a leader of far superior abilities to what he probably anticipated, Trahaiarn did not venture on a second battle with him till he was fully prepared by re-inforcements, and all necessary warlike appointments, to insure his triumph. By such wise precautions, in the next engagement, Trahaiarn not only became the victor, but compelled his defeated enemy to fly the island. Octavius, however, was as persevering and resolute in his efforts to regain his lost authority as, unfortunately for his fame, he proved unscrupulous in the means of its attainment. He stands charged in history with having caused the assassination of Trahaiarn—when he once more seized the reigns of empire in the double capacity of Roman governor and supreme king of Britain.

Octavius shrewdly foresaw that by his hostile bearing towards Constantine, and the destruction of his officer, he could not fail to ingratiate himself with the ruling powers at Rome, to whom the son of the late emperor Constantius Chlorus appeared in the light of an enemy of the empire, which he aimed to seize by force of arms—notwithstanding the solemnity with which his dying father had invested him with the purple, and the unanimity with which the soldiery had hailed “imperator.” He not only succeeded in obtaining a confirmation of his rank as the lieutenant of the empire in Britain, but by the intrigues, carried on by his emissaries in the imperial city, he obtained the appointment for a military man then at Rome to take office under him as commander of the Roman legions in this island. This person was Maximus, a daring adventurer, whose career soon became a matter of history—and whose marriage, in



after time, with Ellen the daughter of Octavius, the lady of this memoir, became the source of many political troubles connected with the destinies of this island.

As the epoch of which we are treating became pregnant with national evils that affected the welfare of this country to very remote aftertimes, to enable the reader to see his way clearly through the intricacy of conflicting incidents, we shall here briefly present a view of Roman-British affairs previous to the appearance of Maximus on the stage of history.

In the year 364, south Britain was exposed to a furious incursion from the marauders of the north, under the names of the Picts and the Scots, with other barbarous auxiliaries. While Britain was thus overrun, and subjected to the depredations of the rude tribes of Caledonians, joined by the wild Hibernian rovers, the Franks and Saxons also came and pillaged the coasts, so that the whole island was in a flame. It required therefore a powerful force, led by some great commander, to repress the depredators and to rescue the province from its calamitous situation. It is difficult for us to conceive how so large a territory should so easily be laid waste and overrun without the supposition that the great body of the inhabitants were not well affected to the Roman government—and if they were become a dispirited people, and felt they had no country of their own to defend, we can easily account for their pusillanimity. In order to rescue the province, the emperor Valentinian sent over the celebrated Theodosius, father to the great emperor of that name. The general took with him several bands of Roman veterans, and lost no time after his landing to meet the enemy. In his march, from Sandwich to London, he defeated several parties of the barbarians, released a multitude of captives, and, after distributing to his soldiers a small portion of the spoil, he restored the remainder to the rightful proprietors. The citizens of London received the hero with exulting joy as a deliverer; and, by his consummate skill and bravery, he soon routed the invaders, and drove them home. By pursuing his conquests Theodosius restored the country between the two walls to the Roman empire, and gave it,

in honour of the emperor, the name of *Valentia*.\* He diligently restored the ruined cities, and made the fortifications secure, after rescuing every part of the province from the hands of a cruel and rapacious enemy.

The valour and prudence of this able and political general raised him to high estimation in Britain, which he left in such a state of defence as to provide for its tranquility for many years. The first interruption of this happy state of things was occasioned by the adherence of the Britons to the usurpation of Octavius, and the assumption of the imperial purple by "the tyrant" Maximus.

Maximus was the son of a Spaniard who appears to have attached himself to Roman interests—having left his own country and entered Britain among the followers of Constantius Chlorus. He married a British lady related to the empress Helena, who became the mother of this Maximus; thus it was that the intimacy originated between the family and the latter. Maximus had occupied, it would appear, a subordinate rank in the Roman army, which, agreeably to the restlessness of his character, he quitted, and went to Rome with a view either of intriguing for promotion or some other personal end. It was during this absence of Maximus that the aspiring Octavius, as before related, raised himself to sovereignty; and apparently knowing his man well for congeniality of sentiments, employed him to forward his views with the reigning powers at Rome, and rewarded his services by getting him appointed commander of the Roman legions which then garrisoned Britain. Maximus in return seems to have entered fully into all the interests of Octavius. He led the imperial forces against the Picts and Scots, who were perpetually infesting the southern parts of the island, and succeeding in destroying immense numbers of these barbarians, and driving the rest homeward, discomfited, their bands broken and dispersed. These gallant actions, together with his half British origin, gained him great popularity both among the Roman troops and the natives of

\* See Gibbon, vol. III., c. 25.

the island. But there was one master-stroke of policy yet to be achieved, calculated to crown the pyramid, from whose summit he might look down on the whole array of favouring circumstances which led direct to the attainment of ambition's highest hope. This was, to win the heart and hand of the fair Ellen, only daughter of Octavius, and the subject of this memoir.

Besides his elevated position as commandant of the imperial legions, Maximus appears to have been a very personable soldier, bold, dashing, and intrepid; superficial qualities, it is true, but generally such as find favour in a woman's eye, when the most transcendent virtues, divested of tinsel pretensions, utterly fail. These were not the times for fair ladies to exclaim—

"Wisdom and wit were all he had,  
But these were all to me."

Whatever might be her feelings and her opinions respecting this imposing personage, certain it is, that Ellen did not reject his advances; perhaps very few ladies would be disposed to act otherwise, especially as she found this lover a great favourite with her father, who had discouraged the addresses of a former suitor. The gentleness of character attributed to Ellen would warrant us in concluding that filial obedience had the principal share in her assentive decision. In those days, as well as all others up to our own, interested compulsory marriages, for the advancement of ambitious or political purposes, formed one of the saddest links in the long historical chain of woman's wrongs. The adventurer Maximus, however, at length gained his point, and was united in marriage with the daughter of his friend and patron.

What makes it probable that this union was not exactly founded on mutual affection is, that there was a disappointed lover in the case—not rejected by Ellen, but by her father, who in the first instance favoured such an intended match, and then, as his ambitious aspirations unfolded and expanded their dazzling glories, commanded her to love and wed another.

The rejected suitor was Octavius's own nephew, Conan Meriadoc, a very eminent British chieftain of these times, whose name stands ever memorable in ancient British history. He was lord of the region of Denbigh, in addition to which he held the dukedom of Cornwall, and was celebrated for his energy of character and great influence among the people. Conan had also his ambitious projects in the once intended union with his fair cousin, whom, notwithstanding, he held in affectionate regard for her personal merits. He calculated that on the death of her father, whenever it might happen, that he should, through this anticipated marriage, succeed him both in his Roman governorship and his British sovereignty. But thus disappointed both in his love and ambitious anticipations his resentment was boundless. A deadly enmity was cherished between him and Maximus, and many a fierce and mutually destructive battle fought, to the grievous annoyance of the public peace, and the great unhappiness of the lady of this memoir, the wife of one of the parties and cousin of the other.

By the interference of their mutual friends, however, the rancour of their hostility gradually declined, and each party was persuaded that great advantages would result from the establishment of a permanent peace between them. Thus it has ever been with the contentious in all ages, the example of former sufferers avails nothing; neither party will see their advantage in sheathing the war-sword till their mutual exhaustion compel them to the measure—and the desolation they have caused becomes the finger point of Destiny, warning them to desist or perish.

As it will soon appear that Maximus had most to gain by pacification—agreeably to the plausibility of his character we may conceive the earliest overtures came from him—and that the pride of the British chieftain being so conciliated that they were readily accepted. Thus from the bitterest of enemies these men soon became excellent friends, speedily to be united in their aims, and bound by mutual interests. In this reconciliation and unanimity we may trace the wily address of the Roman commander, to whose advanced schemes of ambition the assistance of the British chieftain now *became so essential* and even indispensable.



By the machinations of Maximus Britain now became a theatre for certain politico-dramatic exhibitions, long in rehearsal, at length ready for production. Having himself, for a considerable time, enacted the part of an intriguing demagogue, alternately exciting and soothing the passions of the tumultuous soldiery, these amiable worthies conceived they could do nothing better than treat their commander with a performance of the oft-repeated farce of emperor-making, choosing him as their hero—and relying on his promises of wealth, honours, and advancement for all his supporters. Accordingly Maximus was hailed "imperator" by the wild but unanimous acclamations of his licentious legionaries—adding one more to the several imperial pretenders already in the field, all using their best exertions for the destruction of their country, and of all men who opposed their individual aggrandizement.

It must have been about this prosperous period of his adventurous fortunes that Maximus found an opportunity of representing to Conan Meriadoc what a superior field would be opened to his ambition, could he be persuaded to abandon his small domains in Britain, and accompany him to the continent. That there, their united forces would soon acquire for him ample territories where he might found a future kingdom, in which his latest posterity should flourish in regal magnificence.

Certain it is, that the British chieftain immediately caught the fire of these ambitious conceptions, and determined on an immediate attempt to realize them, by joining the expedition of the new emperor elect.\*

We now arrive at the period when the lady of this memoir comes into public notice. One of the first acts of Maximus, after his elevation to the empire, was to hold out alluring prospects to the spirited youth of Britain, to induce

\* J. Hughes remarks, "by his accession to the imperial dignity and retiring from the island, a new change took place in the dynasty of the British kings; but during the life of Maximus the sovereignty must be considered as existing entire, though lost in the superior dignity of the imperial title."—*Horæ Brit.* This author seems to have forgotten that Octavius, the father of Ellen, was one of the firmest of the adherents of Maximus, and became his officer and representative when that adventurer abandoned this island.



them to become warriors in his cause. His views were to dazzle the senate and the inhabitants of Rome and the other soldiers of the empire, with conquests yet to be achieved in Gaul and elsewhere, in order to gain from the general voice a ratification of his election to the purple by his own legions: or in case that honour was denied him, to put down his opponents by force of arms. To attain this end he was indebted to his newly-formed friendship with Conan Meriadoc, who being a native-born prince, as might be expected, had the superiority over him in popularity with his countrymen. Besides his nativity in the island, much of the influence of Conan, and Ellen the wife of Maximus, is traceable to their being also born christians, and having distinguished themselves as supporters and propagators of the faith—as, at their period, the christians of Britain appear to have been numerous. Thus the known hostility of Maximus to the christians, although from policy he abstained from persecuting those of this island, utterly debarred him from a chance of enlisting them in his legions without the assistance of his British connections. Octavius, now grown aged, the most active agents in forwarding the views of Maximus were Ellen, his wife, and Conan Meriadoc, who appears to have been looked up to by the christians as the heads of their community, and their natural protectors. They soon succeeded in raising him an army of sixty thousand men. Strange as it may appear, in this unfeminine undertaking the name of Ellen stands more prominent than her warlike cousin's, and her influence is supposed to have been greater, in encouraging the Britons, especially the christian portion of them, to enter the army of Maximus. This speaks strongly for her intellectual capacity, as the multitude in all ages will be found to have given their suffrages principally where superiority of mind was most manifest; and the preponderance of female influence over a devotional community where a mission of mercy is the foundation of their creed, is but a natural result. This army, in "the Welsh Triads" is called one of the three emigrating hosts of the island of Britain; as their purpose was to settle in the lands which they should conquer in Gaul.

With this "mighty host" Maximus now prepared to embark for Gaul. It was arranged that Ellen, now his empress, was to remain in Britain till the success of his arms should enable him to ensure her security, when a stately escort would be provided to attend her over—so as to introduce her with due honours to the inhabitants of the "eternal city," as the partner of his imperial dignities. Alas, for the futility of mortal hopes founded on the grandest schemes of human ambition! They now parted never to meet again.

Maximus embarked with the first division of this great army, and crossed the seas to Gaul, leaving Conan Meriadoc as his second in command, who speedily followed with the rest of his forces. They were soon employed against the Armoricans, who inhabited that part of France then called *Armorica*,\* but since known as *Bretagne*, or *Brittany*. In this enterprize Conan and his followers appear to have made incursions and fought separately from the Romans, and to have commenced operations by making conquests for themselves. They soon overthrew the army of their opponents, killed Imball, their king, in battle, and entirely conquered the country. As all this was done ostensibly for the service of Maximus, he assented that Conan Meriadoc should assume the sovereignty of the conquered nation, to be holden by him and his heirs as a dependency of the British crown. Leaving garrisons to protect his conquests, the British chieftain now joined his forces to those of Maximus—when they both proceeded on their destructive course to conquer the rest of Gaul as well as the Roman legions that adhered to the present government. The two acknowledged emperors of this period were Theodosius and Gratian; the former governed the east, and the latter the west, and who was at this time in command of the Roman army in Gaul. Among the vices of Maximus was the black one of ingratitude; and it appears that this very emperor, Gratian, whom he came to oppose and destroy, had been his very gracious benefactor; and to him he was indebted for his appointment

\* *Armorica* is derived from the Welsh description of its geographical situation. "*Ar mŵr uch*," signifying "on the upper sea."

as commander of the Roman legions in Britain. Fortunately the career of this "bold bad man" proved as brief as it had been atrocious.

Entering Gaul in imperial state, the Roman soldiery who had admired his spirit and martial bearing, as a favourable contrast to the pleasure-seeking inactivity of the emperor who commanded them, they received the usurper with joyful acclamations, deserted their legitimate sovereign, and united themselves with the forces of Maximus.

The indolent Gratian, then at Paris, seeing his standard forsaken by his troops, fled precipitately towards Lyons with a train of only three hundred horse. There he was delivered into the hands of Andragathius, master of the cavalry of the usurper, by whom he was despatched. The death of the emperor was followed by the destruction of the most powerful of his generals, among whom was Mellobandes, king of the Franks.

The successes of Maximus increased his insolence, and emboldened him to make proposals to the emperor Theodosius, who governed the east. That emperor found it necessary to dissemble his resentment, and to accept the alliance of the tyrant, the murderer of his benefactor. At the same time it was stipulated that Maximus should content himself with the countries on this side of the Alps, whereby he was acknowledged emperor of Britain, Gaul, Spain, and Germany.

Had Maximus remained satisfied with this ample territory, he might have ended his days in peace; but he aspired to the entire empire of the west. He marched over the Alps into Italy, and bid fair at one time of success: but Theodosius hastened from Constantinople to quell the tyrant. A fierce conflict in Panonia decided the fate of Maximus by giving success to the arms of Theodosius. Maximus fled to Aquileia, in Italy; but he had scarcely reached that city when he was surrounded by his victorious enemy. The indignation of the people, and the disaffection of his soldiers, conspired to deliver him up to his fate. He was conducted like a malefactor to the camp of Theodosius, who abandoned him to the rage of his soldiers, by whom his



head was severed from his body. Such was the end of Maximus, whose ambition was not only ruinous to himself but to the country where he first set up his title to sovereign power, for he drained Britain of her warlike youth, and left her a prey to the inroads of her barbarian neighbours, A.D. 388.

The native Britons who had followed Maximus to the continent were not present at either of the two engagements which decided the fate of their adventurous leader. Maximus had a son named Victor, born of a British lady, and to whom he expected the Britons would be ardently attached. This youth headed an army who engaged in defending the cause of the usurper and his son in Gaul; but the son soon shared the misfortunes of the father, for the British troops were defeated, and Victor fell at the head of them. In this most pitiable condition they had been left, exposed to the insults of a triumphant enemy, forlorn and destitute, until that in their wanderings they found an asylum in Armorica, or Brittany.\*

This last passage would infer that the Britons under the command of Conan Meriadoc did not conquer, or "find an asylum" in Armorica, till after the defeat and death of Maximus. But such a conclusion meets its confutation, by a passage previous to the last, in the admission that the native Britons were not present at either of the two engagements which decided the fate of Maximus. Where else could they be then but with their leader, actively *planting* themselves in Armorica, which doubtlessly, according to our former statement, had been conquered by them previous to the final catastrophe which dispersed the followers of the imperial pretender. The Britons who assisted Victor, the son of Maximus, appear to have been very inconsiderable in number, and nothing can be more probable than that they returned to, and found refuge with, the rest of their countrymen in Armorica, in the forlorn condition ascribed to them.

A peculiar feature in the character of Conan Meriadoc appears corroborative of our latter assumption—his exceed-

\* Hughes's *Hornæ Britannica*.

ing prudence; or, if it must have a less gainly name, his cautious selfishness. This led him to be very sparing of his aid to Maximus until he had foreserved himself and his companions by insuring a certain resting place, a secure retreat in case of reverses—a piece of good generalship creditable to the forethought which at all times seems to have guided his actions and marked his character. Even after making these acquisitions, the calculating policy of the British chieftain is discernible by the manner in which he avoided committing himself and his followers with the adverse Roman powers, in case they came off victorious; *his forces were absent from the two last battles which decided the fate of Maximus.* Since his arrival on the continent, the real character of that vicious man must have gradually opened to him, and by its hideousness have repelled him from too close a partizanship; his cruelty, rashness, and insatiable avarice. Those unpopular vices would direct the shrewdness of the British chieftain to foresee their consequences in the probability of his ultimate failure, and so justified his own policy of standing aloof from the impending perils which in the end crushed the headlong unprincipled adventurer. Added to these self-saving views on the part of Conan, considering what human nature is, unrefined by principles estranged to a rude era, it is not improbable but some portion of his ancient grudge to Maximus for supplanting him in the affections of his cousin Ellen may have in some degree influenced his conduct, and damped his ardour in the cause which had brought him from Britain, when his own turn had been effectually served. Of course, these are any thing but elevating views of the character of Conan Meriadoc; yet, notwithstanding, it is likely they come nearer the truth than more favourable assumptions coloured by national prejudices. In proof that he was no mean politician, however, the consequences resulting from the line which he adopted were exactly what he sought, worked for, and anticipated. His equivocal position in regard to aiding Maximus, and his apparent desertion of the usurper's cause, saved him from the vengeance of the conquering Roman army, and induced Theodosius to leave him unmolested in his Gallic conquests.



It is a curious circumstance, amidst conflicting historical details, that the French writers have strenuously denied that our insular Britons formed the settlement here described under Conan Meriadoc, or that they planted any colony on the continent till after the Saxon invasion; but mere denial, notwithstanding, is no disproof. However, this sort of antiquarian opposition or encyclopedean disputation amounts to little more than a tenacious quibbling about dates—as no writhings of wounded national pride, or that smaller prejudice, local egotism, could ever assume a denial of the fact that the Britons *did* conquer Armorica, settled there, where their descendants still remain, and gave the country the name which it still retains, of Bretagne in French, and in English Brittany. Our circumstantial account of its conquest under Conan Meriadoc agrees so well with every probability of correctness as to the era assigned to it in our records, that any attempt to overthrow such united testimonies, unsupported by well authenticated proofs, must be futile and utterly unavailing.

We now return to Ellen, the lady of this memoir, who, by the tragical death of Maximus at this time, became a widow. Whether she gave way to any sanguine anticipations resultable from the warlike expedition of her lord, or to any violent emotions of sorrow, on his failure and pitiable death, is unknown. Considering the ungenial influences which brought about her union, and of the headlong wildness of that adventurer's exaltation, a sedate mind like hers would augur too wisely to build her structure of worldly happiness on so infirm a foundation, and might be disciplined to anticipate the fearful evils that followed—so that, altogether, it is probable that Time found no wounds beyond his power to cicatrize, nor sorrows too insurmountable for him to subdue. Although her lord was no more, and her dream of ambition, if ever she entertained such, melted into air—the public call for the services of Ellen had yet to be responded to, by as strange a requisition as ever tasked the energies or ingenuity of a woman.

The conquest and occupation of Armorica by Conan Meriadoc and his followers gave rise to one of the most remark-

able incidents in the early history of this country; yet, it is but fair to confess, the whole narrative is considered by many in the light of a fabulous legend. With our faith in those national records "the Historical Triads," and the Welsh chroniclers, which avouch the fact, we are not of that opinion, but decidedly conceive, that however the detail may be garnished by monkish fiction, that it has truth for its foundation. It is said that Conan Meriadoc, after taking possession of the country with his British army, prohibited his men from marrying with the Armoricans, or any of the native women of Gaul—being determined to banish all whom the sword of war had spared of the original population, and to people the country anew with a genuine British race. For this purpose he sent messengers to Dionethas, whom he had left as his deputy in the government of the dukedom of Cornwall, and to his cousin Ellen, the heroine of this memoir. Of the former he desired that he would send him for his bride his daughter Ursula, to whom it is presumed he was previously betrothed, with a numerous retinue of young ladies and maidens of humbler degree to become the wives of his officers and men.

But it was to his cousin Ellen, whose popularity and influence with the christian community was so great, that he looked for the fulfilment of this unparalleled requisition; nor, as far as her efforts were concerned, did he look in vain. Though hitherto noticed without dissent by any of the writers who have treated of this subject, it is manifest that Conan Meriadoc's design of dispossessing of their country, and probably annihilating the conquered natives of Armorica, was, morally considered, most atrocious; and in a political view most unwise; it is, therefore, we behold with regret, a gentle-minded female, imbued with the merciful precepts of christianity, thus imposed upon by the unscrupulous votaries of ambition, to bend herself to a purpose so unhallowed—but which, from her confidence in her cousin's representations, she doubtless considered of the most virtuous tendency, and conducive to the propagation of that humanizing faith which she ardently believed was ultimately to civilize and redeem a barbarous and condemned world.

With her feelings strongly enlisted in a cause, so speciously set forth to win her enthusiastic support, but the true bearing of which was carefully veiled from her view, Ellen went to work with all the energetic spirit with which she appears to have been endued. It is probable, however, that she found her mission of matrimony a very popular one, and that, as she travelled to different districts remote and near to address the numerous assemblages prepared to receive her, that she met very ready and attentive hearers, and that it required no strenuous force of argument, flowers of rhetoric, or pathetic demonstration, to persuade some portion of her auditory to embrace her views; and by a short sea voyage to enter a territory where husbands were to be found "plentiful as blackberries;" especially as it may be presumed that many of these fair ones already had professed admirers, brothers, or other relatives, in the army of Conan Meriadoc. However, the result of Ellen's oratory, seconded perhaps by predisposal on the part of her assentive hearers, was, that the daughters of the land came forward in dozens, scores, fifties, hundreds, and at length thousands, as pious candidates for wedlock, or volunteer votaries for the hymeneal altar. We are told that Ellen had the address to induce no less than eleven thousand British virgins to embrace this undertaking.

We are told that the Lady Ursula and this vast concourse of females, embarked in the different ships prepared for their reception; but it seems that Ellen, personally, was not of their number; and it is probable she was at that time a middle-aged woman, and by no means desirous of a matrimonial connection. It is certain that in after time she repented, suffered, and sorrowed most intensely, for the well-intentioned part which she had taken in advocating this fatal emigration; as it is in the natural course of things, that as none of the party reached their destination, but suffered and perished far from their homes and friends, that their relatives in Britain should reproach her as the principal cause of their bereavement. And perhaps taunted her with keeping aloof herself from the perils of an expedition which she had so earnestly advised, and energetically eulo-



gized, but was too *prudent* to stake her personal safety in it. We see the cruelty and injustice of such a charge, and can conceive the impassioned vehemence and inconsolable affliction of those so bereft of their near and dear ones; their desolate firesides and overflowing hearts, the most fitting monuments of the distressing catastrophe. And sad as the saddest, we can conceive Ellen enduring these piercing taunts with silent resignation—a heart consumed with unexpressed grief—appealing for the truth of her blamelessness to the only true scanner of all hearts, without censuring the human injustice which condemned her.

There are different and very conflicting accounts of the tragic termination of this singular and disastrous voyage. The details of it, as stated in Roman catholic church history, is so greatly overcharged with monkish fables and incredible absurdities, concocted in the school of holy frauds, as to violate the probability of the results narrated. However, to give the reader a specimen of the extravagance here deprecated, in the article entitled "St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins," we have cited one of their versions of this catastrophe.

In the Welsh chronicles we are informed that "adverse winds and a tempest arose on their departure, by which the fleet was scattered; the ships containing the gentle Ursula and her ill-fated maidens, either foundered at sea or were wrecked upon the shores possessed by Guarrius, king of the Huns, or Melga, king of the Picts, by whose barbarous subjects, it is said, the unhappy females were cruelly treated and afterwards slain."

Thus the cruelty and injustice originally contemplated, of forbidding the Britons to unite themselves with the women of Armorica, who had been widowed or orphaned by their arms, by this fatal catastrophe, was completely averted; and it is probable that many of the war-worn Britons were glad to sue to those females whom the virulence of national animosity had in the first instance induced them to reject. The Britons, however, were predominant in the land, which decidedly proves that the survivors of the Roman contests were somewhat numerous, or that the men of Armorica

had been nearly exterminated by the arms of Maximus and Conan Meriadoc. Both history and tradition are silent as to the further state of Ellen. Conan Meriadoc became the first king of Brittany, and founder of the dynasty of British kings there.

Whatever good points may have graced these expeditions, upon the whole they must be considered the most disastrous of measures in their ultimate results that ever was conceived. The departure of so vast a portion of the population drained the south of Britain so fearfully of its inhabitants, that it became a temptation to the rapacity of the barbarous Picts of the north, who invaded the vacated territories in great force; and in their many marauding expeditions they were too fatally successful. It was the continual incursions and depredations of these barbarians that in after-times induced Vortigern to embrace the fatal project of calling in the aid of the Saxons to assist in expelling them; in this they succeeded, but seized the country for themselves, and for centuries did their utmost by assassination and remorseless wars, to exterminate the descendants of their original hosts and employers.

GENERAL NOTE.—Buchanan relates the following anecdote of Maximus, who has figured in this memoir, exhibiting his character in a more favourable light than his bearing in other respects seems to warrant. When Maximus, in conjunction with the Picts, was fighting against the Scotch, the Pictish leader suggested to the Roman governor the necessity of utterly annihilating the Scottish race, as they were a people, he said, who were insensible alike to the terror of the Roman arms and the forbearance of Roman clemency. Struck with the atrocity of the proposal, Maximus replied, "Immortal gods! know barbarian, we noble Romans war not so: we come to save and civilize, and not to massacre mankind."



## THE PRINCESS ELFLEDA,

DAUGHTER OF ALFRED THE GREAT, AND WIDOW OF EDELRED,  
KING OF MERCIA.

ALTHOUGH this terrific warrior queen of the Saxons came among the Welsh only to shed their blood, and seize upon their possessions, to burn their dwellings, and cast the chain of captivity on all whom the sword of war deigned to spare—yet she shall have, what it is probable she never gave our ancestors—fair play at our hands. It is true, that had she appeared in life amidst her present company, her presence would have created any but pleasant sensations; but as the heroic Elfleda is not without her merits, they shall be duly stated and candidly descanted upon.

Elfleda, the daughter of Alfred the Great, was as masculine in frame as she proved intrepid in mind. There is a singular anecdote related of her, that when she received young Edelred, son of the king duke, or earl of Mercia, as her lover, the youthful pair took every precaution to keep their meetings secret. One of these interviews took place during a winter's night; and time, as time always does in such cases, passed more rapidly and unnoted than when the hours are employed in study or devotion. When, at length, the lovers were about to part, at an hour well described as "between the late and early," to their mutual terror, they discovered that a great fall of snow had covered all the ground, so that the footsteps of any retreating party would be traceable in the morning. While in this unutterable state of consternation, the young prince was under the influence of great distress of mind at the probable consequences of a discovery that appeared inevitable—his own audacity in clandestinely visiting his great sovereign's daughter—the peril that threatened his beloved princess from the severity of her father—these reflections hung heavily about his heart—while the fair partner of his imprudence, more wisely, pondered on expedients how to extricate themselves from their troubles. A happy thought, like the golden wing of a passing angel hastening onward

on a mission of mercy, flashed suddenly on the mind of Elfleda, and changed her pallid cheek to the glowing radiancy of revived confidence. In a few words she explained the nature of her plan, and refused for a moment to entertain the delicate scruples of her lover. In an instant she was out at the lattice, or window, of the ground floor apartment which they occupied; then turning her face from it, and bending her back to a convenient state for the prince to mount, she received his weight, and bore him off triumphantly! She carried him with ease and rapidity, a considerable distance beyond the precincts of the palace, put him down in security, wished him good speed, then hurried back to her apartment, which she re-entered at the window.

But this feat of fine horsemanship performed upon the back of a king's daughter, did not pass unwitnessed; two pair of human eyes were expanded to their utmost stretch, in wonderment of a scene so strange—those of king Alfred and the learned Asser his chancellor. The sleepless cares, said to inhabit the kingly crown, and perhaps the chancellor's black cap, had made these sages watchers the livelong night; pondering, perhaps, how best to extirpate certain swarms of national vermin, in the hated forms of the red-haired men of Denmark, who then infested the kingdom; and aimed to perform by the Saxons what the rats are said to do by the rabbits—to kill the whole community, and repeople their dwellings with their own party.

Notwithstanding the cares of state, the vigilant Alfred was no stranger to the amatory meetings between his daughter and the young prince of Mercia; but on witnessing this strange exploit of the young lady's, he determined to put an end to such vagaries for the future. Unknown to the princess, the prince of Mercia was overtaken by swift horsemen, who, according to their instructions, soon brought him back a prisoner. Alfred occupied his chair of state in the throne room, surrounded by his courtiers, when Edelred, in chains, was led in by a party of guards—and to their mutual astonishment and terror confronted with the princess.

After a grave silence of some moments' duration, Alfred demanded of his assembled courtiers, lords and ladies in

their different groups, "what does that man deserve, who presumes to make a mule of a king's daughter?" The ready answer of more than one voice was "he deserves death." After enjoying the wonderment of his court, and the perplexity of the young offenders for a short space, the benevolent Alfred called them to him, and with an outburst of mirth that would shock the etiquette of modern courts, declared that as a punishment due to their enormities they should be made man and wife before sunset; a decree that was accordingly put into speedy execution.\*

But, alas, for the brevity of youthful felicity—those sunny days that well may be called the romance of life! Elfleda has no more to be related in the spirit of the scene we have attempted to describe. The stern and stirring business of life, diversified alone by different degrees of affliction, possessed the rest of her unenviable days. She lost her husband in early life,† who left her the widowed mother of an only daughter named Alfwyen.‡ Soon after this heavy blow occurred the death of her venerable father, the illustrious Alfred, deservedly styled the great. In addition to her affliction for these grievous bereavements, she had to endure much from the rapacity and cruelty of her brothers, who, in their quarrels for the succession to her father's throne, alternately ravaged her little kingdom of Mercia, and seized on a considerable portion of her dominions. Immediately on the death of her father, her eldest brother, Edward, was enthroned in the royal dignity; "which," in the words of Wynne the historian, "so displeased the ambitious spirit of his brother Adelwulph that presently he raised a cruel war against him," and flying to Northumberland, he united his army with that of the hereditary enemies of his family and country the Danes. The Danes and Angles, with a certain number of traitorous Saxons, made him their king. Marching proudly at the head of this barbarous horde, he ravaged the country wherever he

\* As a similar anecdote is related of a daughter of Charlemagne, it would be a difficult matter to vouch for the authenticity of this romantic incident, but the character of all parties places it quite the within the verge of probability.

† In the year 912.

‡ By some authors called Elfwin.



came, destroying all who refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of his title as their sovereign. Among these was his sister Elfleda, the widowed princess of Mercia, who, notwithstanding the ruin which threatened her, had the firmness to deny his right to the dignity which he had arrogated to himself—and who probably rated him in no very choice terms, for his presumption and treason against his elder brother and lawful sovereign. To revenge himself on his sister, Adelwulph had the dastardly cruelty to destroy her country with fire and sword; wherever he passed, desolation marked his progress. It merits particular notice, how history distinguishes that he *subdued* the country of the east Saxons—but only *spoiled* the country of Mercia; from which it may be inferred that the former country acknowledged him for its sovereign, while the latter refused—which argues strongly for the popularity of Elfleda with her subjects. Some time after Adelwulph was slain in a decisive battle, wherein his brother Edward was the victor. Notwithstanding the generosity and loyalty of Elfleda towards Edward, as her elder brother and sovereign, which had subjected her to the revengeful cruelties of Adelwulph, the former, in a spirit of gratuitous heartlessness, deprived her of her sovereignty and revenues in the cities of London and Oxford—on no other plea than what was derived from the suggestions of selfish ambition.\*

If a woman, under any circumstances, can stand excused before the judgment seat of man, for subduing those attractive graces which make her lovely in his eye, her soft demeanour, retiring gentleness, and yielding flexibility of character, to trespass over the sexual boundary with which nature has fenced his prerogatives—to put on the stern characteristics of manhood—not the masquerading foolery of the helmet and war-boots of Mars upon the shrinking frame of Venus—but the dire, fateful earnestness of the life or death hazards of the day of battle—then surely Elfleda is not only uncensurable, but feelingly commendable for the subsequent part she took in repelling personally the

\* The kingdom, or earldom of Mercia, comprised all the country lying north of the Thames.

aggression of ambitious neighbours and every description of marauders or assailants. The unenviable functions which she embraced, glowing as the results of her daring appear in the dubious lustre imposed by success, was not a matter of choice, but literally enforced upon her by the merciless necessity which environed her position. Deprived of the natural support of the dependent state, her womanly condition unprotected by the powerful arm and daring heart of man, she said to her soul in the extremity of her helplessness, "my husband is in the grave, my father's sleep is dreamless of my woes,—my brother—let me not think of him!—no, I have none to help me—then I will be a man myself—as far as in me lies, I will emulate his virtues, and nerve my woman's heart with manly resolution."

In the year 914, when king Edward was busily employed, in opposing and expelling the Danes from the north of England, Hwgan, lord of Brecon and prince of west Wales, "seized, as he thought a favourable opportunity of revenging the many insults which had been offered to his country, and recovering, by well-timed exertions, the possessions which had been wrested from his ancestors; and with the strongest levy he could muster, he passed the Saxon boundary and commenced hostilities."\*

Seeing her brother's dominions thus invaded in his absence, forgetful of his cruelty and injustice towards her and her country, with a refined spirit of magnanimity that would have done honour to a more refined nation and period, this generous daughter of the royal Alfred, who, of all the children of that great prince, seemed alone to inherit the virtues of her father personally, led an army to oppose the prince of Wales. Meeting with Hwgan on the borders, a severe engagement ensued, in which she not only defeated him, but compelled him, with his broken bands, to seek safety in flight. He took his course towards the north of England, and at Derby—the strong hold of the Danish powers, being favourably received by those in power there, he joined his army to theirs, and thus strengthened the enemies of king Edward. Assured of the correctness of

\* Theophilus Jones's history of Breconshire.



this intelligence, Elfleda immediately marched her army into Wales, and entered the town of Brecon in battle array. She attacked the castle\* of prince Hwgan, soon took it by storm, and made the princess, his wife, and thirty-three of her people prisoners of war, whom she sent off to a safe custody in Mercia. This battle in Welsh is called *Gwaith y Dinas Nenydd*; signifying the work of the new fortress.

"Hwgan being thus disconcerted in his projects and disgraced in his arms (as before observed), fled to Derby, where he joined the Danes, who cordially received and tendered him their assistance. Supported by his new friends, he prepared for a recommencement of hostilities; but all his attempts to elude the vigilance, or resist the good fortune of Elfleda, were vain; with incredible activity she hastened with her victorious army and pursued her defeated foe to his rallying place; here, before he was enabled to complete his schemes, she laid close siege to the town. Though Hwgan, on the other side, was not idle, and though he encouraged the garrison, both by exhortation and example, to make a spirited defence, yet after a trifling advantage, the gates of the city were set on fire by Gwayne, lord of Ely, steward to Elfleda, and after a vigorous attack, possession was taken of the citadel by the assailants. Hwgan, perceiving that every thing was irrecoverably lost, determined to die bravely rather than surrender himself dishonourably to a woman—he therefore rushed furiously into the heat of battle, and fell, covered with innumerable wounds."†

Still anxious to assist her brother in clearing the country of those restless intruders the Danes, we find Elfleda next year besieging the city of Leicester, "which was quickly surrendered, and the Danes therein perfectly subdued." The fame of these several actions being bruited abroad, the inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces became, as Wynne expresses it, fearful and timorous; and the Yorkshire men voluntarily did her homage, and professed their services.

Such, accomplished in a very brief space of time, were

\* Wynne's history of Wales.

† Wynne's history of Wales.

the warlike feats of the intrepid, never-failing princess Elfleda. Some of our Cambrian historians, who are more remarkable for the warmth of their patriotism, than the coolness of an unbiassed judgment on her claims to admiration, have cast their sneers at her assumption of the functions of a general, and called her an amazon; observing also, "that from her masculine talents and military exploits, she was generally called the *king*:"\* but fortunately for her fame, none could disparage her with more invidious terms.

But Elfleda was not distinguished merely as an emulator of the "town-battering, homicidal, gory Mara,"† for honourable mention is made of her, as "a woman of singular virtues—and one that greatly strengthened the kingdom of Mercia, by building towns and castles against the incursions of foreign enemies."‡ She is also favourably noticed for having repaired and rebuilt those portions of the city of Chester which had been battered or destroyed by the Danes. The towns which she built in Mercia were Stren-gat and Bruge, by the forest of Morph; Tamworth, Stafford, Edelburgh, Cherenburgh, Wadeburgh, and Run-cofe—eight fortified towns or cities! more than double the number that she is said to have destroyed. Thus, to her glory be it recorded, amazon as she is called, her pacific deeds far surpass in magnitude all that is attributed to her destructive feats in war; and, therefore, the good which she performed for the benefit of the human race, in the same proportion will be found to over-balance the evil.

She died at Tamworth, in the year 920, after eight years rule over the kingdom of Mercia. Her ceaseless exertions for the protection and general benefit of her subjects, must have won her their most devoted love and admiration while living, and their deepest regret for their irreparable loss at her decease. She lies buried at St. Peter's, in the city of Gloucester.

It is with no slight degree of indignation we learn, that on the death of this generous heroine, her brother, king

\* Theophilus Jones.

† Wynne's history of Wales.

‡ Cowper's Homer's Iliad.

Edward, the unworthy successor of the great king Alfred, had the unspeakable baseness to disinherit her orphaned daughter Alfwyen; when he seized all her lands in Mercia, under the unfounded pretence that he had heard she was about to contract a private marriage with Reynald, king of the Danes, unknown to him, whom her mother had appointed her guardian.

We intended to conclude this memoir here; but since writing the foregoing, we have alighted on Pennant's account of this heroine. As he records some matters not included in our researches, and has omitted many points herein embraced, we will give his account entire, so that altogether the reader will have as perfect a biography as can be gleaned at this time of day of the celebrated *Elfleda*.\*

"This lady (*Ethelfleda*) is so frequently mentioned in the Mercian history, that it will not be impertinent to give a brief account of her. She was the undegenerate daughter of the great Alfred, and the wife of Edelred, earl of Mercia, under his brother-in-law Edward king of England. On the birth of her first child† she separated herself from her husband, and for the rest of her days, like an amazon of old, determined on a life of chastity, and devoted herself to deeds of arms. She kept on the best terms with her husband: they united in all acts of munificence and piety; restored cities, founded abbeys, and removed to more suitable places the bones of long-departed saints. After the death of her husband, in 912, she assumed the government of the Mercian earldom, and the command of the army. She became so celebrated for her valour, that the effeminate titles of lady, or queen, were thought unworthy of her: she received in addition, those of lord, and king.

*O Elfleda potens, O terror virgo virorum  
Victrix natura, nomine digna viri*

\* Pennant and some other authors write her name *Ethelfleda*, but in the earlier accounts of her she is generally called *Elfleda*.

† Rapin, and other authors state, that the agony and life-peril of travail, at the birth of her child, caused her to form this resolution, being assured that if again subjected to such danger, that her death would probably be the consequence.



Tu quo splendidior fieres, natura puellam,  
 Te probitas fecit nomen habere viri.  
 Te mutare decet, sed solum nomine sexus,  
 Tu Regina potens Rexque trophœa parans,  
 Nec jam Cæsare splendidior virgo virago vale.

*Henry Huntington, lib. v., p. 354.*

Elfleda, terror of mankind !  
 Nature, for ever unconfined,  
 Stamped thee in woman's tender frame,  
 Though worthy of a hero's name.  
 Thee, thee alone, the mute shall sing  
 Dread empress and victorious king !  
 E'en Cæsar's conquests were out-done  
 By thee, illustrious amazon !—R. W.

The heroine appears well to have united this eulogium.\* Her abilities and activity were perpetually exerted in the service of her country. She erected a castle at Sceargate; another at Briega, the modern Bridgewater; the third at Tammeorthige, or Tamworth; a fourth at Stæfford; a fifth at Eadesbyrig, now the chamber in the forest in Cheshire; a sixth at Wæringwic, or Warwick; a seventh at Cyricbyrie, or Chirbury; an eighth at Weardbyrig, or Wedsburrow, in Staffordshire; and a ninth at Runcoc, or Runcorn, in Cheshire. She took Brecknock, and made its queen prisoner: she stormed Deoraby, or Derby, but lost four thanes within the place; and finally she restored the city of Legerceaster, after its desolation by the barbarians, rebuilt the walls, and, as some pretend, enlarged the city so greatly as to include the castle, which before stood without the ancient precincts. Death put an end to her glorious course, at Tamworth, in the summer of 922, from whence her body was translated to Gloucester. Her loss was regretted by the whole kingdom, and by none so sensibly felt as by her brother Edward, for she was as useful to that prince in the cabinet as in the field.†

\* Much as we admire the fame of Elfleda, we must protest against this conclusion, this ridiculous instance of exaggerated eulogy, contained in the two last lines of the poem. The comparison with Cæsar certainly is altogether injudicious in the extreme.

† If this eulogy of Edward is founded in truth, how are we to account for his very questionable conduct in disinheriting the daughter of Elfleda, as before recorded?

## THE LADY EMMA,

WIFE OF GRIFFITH AB MADOC, LORD OF DINAS BRAN AND  
LOWER POWYS.

AMONG her other claims to the notice of posterity, this lady and her unpopular lord stand recorded, in a direct line, as the immediate ancestors of our great national hero Owen Glendower.\*

Of the husband of Lady Emma, Pennant says, "Griffith ab Madoc, lord of Dinas Bran (so styled in consequence of his making that castle his chief residence), unfortunately became enamoured of Emma, daughter of Lord James Audley,† who alienating his affections from his country, made him one instrument of its subjection, and the destruction of his own family. He took part with Henry III. and Edward I. against his own natural prince. The resentment of his countrymen was raised against him, and he was obliged to confine himself in his castle of Dinas Bran, where probably grief and shame put an end to his life in 1270.

Proverbially accurate as Pennant is generally allowed to be, he is not altogether correct in this statement. When Llewelyn ab Griffith, the last native prince of Wales, found his star in the ascendant, he paid a hostile visit to Powys, punished the adherents of Edward I., and pardoned those whose unhappy circumstances compelled them to desert the cause of their country, on their abandoning the standard of their invaders, and returning to their duty. Thomas, in his "memoirs of Owain Glyndwr," says—"he banished Griffith Gwenwynwyn out of the country, but Griffith ab Madoc's submission restored him into favour, and reinstated him in his patrimony. Griffith's policy was commendable ;

\* In Welsh written Owain Glyndwr.

† Lord James Audley was a vallant English captain of these times, who dreadfully annoyed the Welsh with his German cavalry, which, however, was at length totally destroyed.



the fortune of England was now at a low ebb; he returned to the duty he had long deserted, and found protection in his natural sovereign. His return to allegiance and fidelity diffused joy and satisfaction through every breast; nor does history record any disobedient acts of his to the day of his death—which happened in 1270, at his castle of Dinas Bran. He was buried in the neighbouring abbey of Llanelgwast,\* which his father had erected.†

"Regibus Anglorum fuit hic Griffinus Amicus,  
Aversatus herum Leollunum, cujus ab iram  
Se bene munitum Castello Semper in illo  
Continuit latitans, nomen locus indidit inde:  
Orbati teneris nati Inquuntur in armis."—*Pentarchia*.

The conclusion at which Pennant and the Welsh historians have arrived, respecting the evil consequences of Griffith ab Madoc's marriage with the lady Emma, is scarcely warranted, on a fair investigation of the history of this period, so disastrous to Cambrian independence. There were other, and very powerful reasons for the conduct which he adopted, without attributing undue blame to a woman, whose greatest misfortunes were being too lovely, a foreigner in a strange land, and native of that hostile nation, most abhorred by her husband's countrymen. In fact there was nothing new or strange in the conduct of Griffith ab Madoc, however unworthy it may be deemed.

The chieftains of Powys were always notorious for their anti-patriotism and alliance with their national enemies. Even Owen ab Madoc ab Meredith, the grandfather of

\* Llanelgwast was one of the last founded abbeys; it was founded 26th Henry VIII., to be endowed with £188 8s. per annum, according to Dugdale; and £214 3s. 5d. according to Speed. "It was granted 9th James I. to Edward Wotton."—*Tanner's Not. Mon.* "There still remain the ruins of the church, and part of the abbey; the last inhabited by a farmer. The church was built in the form of a cross, in different styles of architecture, the most ancient is that of the east end, where the windows are in form of long and narrow slips, pointed at top. The window at the west end is large, divided by stone tracery, and above is a round window of elegant work."—*Pennant*.

† Griffith left four sons by the lady Emma, his only wife—Madoc, Llewelyn, Griffith, and Owen. Griffith became the founder of the family which gave Wales her Owen of Glendower.

this Griffith, married to Susannah, sister of the patriotic Owen Gwyneth, and therefore, without the pretence of being biassed by an English wife, being a leading man in the times of Henry II., Richard I., and king John, was generally in opposition to the interests of his country. In an assembly of chieftains convened by Llewelyn ab Iorworth, at which Madoc (the father of Griffith) stood foremost, that hard-fighting generous prince made known to them his determination to rescue his nation from English vassalage. He represented to them in strong pathetic terms the evils resulting from their lamentable disunion and their want of virtue in deserting the interests of their country, whose miserable situation he painted in such colours as wrought upon their minds a momentary but too transient gleam of patriotism. Madoc, doubtless, felt this appeal as a reflection on the infamy of his father, who confederated with Henry II., and incited him to invade North Wales, commanded his navy, and made a descent on the island of Anglesea, where a cruel butchery of the inhabitants, and an immense destruction of property, was the result, although the ravagers were ultimately worsted and cut to pieces, by the islanders.\* Another princely traitor of the Powysian race was Owen ab Edwyn the father of Angharad, consort of Griffith ab Cynan, as narrated in the memoir of that amiable princess. He deserted, with his whole army, to king Henry I., which compelled his son-in-law, the sovereign of North Wales, to fly his dominions and seek refuge in Ireland. With these striking instances before us, of the defection of former princes of Powys, it is unjust to charge the English wife of Griffith ab Madoc as the sole cause of her husband's attachment to the sovereign of England.

\* His treachery towards his native country, and alliance with Henry, arose from a spirit which could not brook submission, in conformity to the rules of Roderic the Great, to Owen Gwyneth, the reigning prince of North Wales. Fowel, in his history of Wales, says, "notwithstanding his defection from the cause of his country, he was a man who feared God and relieved the poor."—As much has been said in favour of the greatest villain that ever disgraced humanity, William de Breos, lord of Abergavenny. See the memoir of Mathilda de Hala in this work.

Setting these considerations aside, the private conduct of the lady Emma appears to have been both wise and exemplary in all respects. The lordships of Griffith ab Madoc stood, as we might say, centrally between the English and Welsh belligerents. Perceiving perhaps, with a prophetic eye, what must ultimately prove the issue of the contest between a powerful and a weak state, the natural conclusion must be that what be considered prudence, got the better of his patriotism, and determined him to join the strongest party; the success of which, in his view, was most likely to bring about the earliest settlement of the peace of the country, and be a bulwark of protection to his family. Judged by Spartan or ancient Roman principles, his conduct must be condemned. But, if prudence is indeed a virtue, and the preservation of his own family allowable to have a first hold on his affections, the decision of Griffith ab Madoc, in the eye of modern civilization, cannot be considered in the light of very deep criminality, even if counselled thereto by his beloved English partner. But whatever may have been the lady Emma's political sins in the estimation of Welshmen of olden times (and indeed it is doubtful whether any better foundation can be found for the charges against her than the violent prejudices of the times, and the bitterness of national antipathy), in the eye of humanity, her private worth calls for deep appreciation, as a highly honoured wife and a greatly beloved mother. Previous to his death Griffith ab Madoc manifested his affection by the settlement on her of considerable lands for her own personal revenue. There is a hundred in Flintshire bearing the name of Maelor Saesnaeg;\* so called from its being a part of the jointure of this English lady. As witnesses to this settlement on their mother, in their father's lifetime, the four sons of Griffith set their hands and seals, and became also the faithful executors of a deed which deprived them of a portion of their inheritance.

\* According to Pennant, Maelor Saesneg consists of these parishes—Worthenbury, Bangor, Hanmer, and the chapelry of Overton on this side of the Dee; of Erbistock on the other side, opposite to Overton; and of Hope in the other portion of the county of Flint. Part only of Erbistock is in the county of Flint, the rest is in Denbighshire.



The crowning proof of the excellence of character which distinguished the lady Emma, in her own family, is to be found in the affection of these sons. It is pleasant to see recorded, long after the death of their father, these worthy young men not only confirmed and renewed their father's settlement on their widowed mother, but made considerable additions to the original grant.

It has been mentioned, that at the death of Griffith ab Madoc, he left four sons; consequently, from the peculiarity of her position, the lady Emma found herself placed under circumstances of great difficulty in respect of these children. Her husband's nearest kindred claimed the guardianship of the four boys, which their mother determined to resist, and opposed with all the energy of her character, which became more developed when she found herself without a protector, and thrown upon the resources of her own mind. These paternal relatives naturally feared, that if the children were taken by their mother to England to be reared there, they would become thoroughly English in their feelings and future political bias, inclining, of course, more to the king of England than to the princes of Wales. Notwithstanding her watchful vigilance to thwart their designs, they succeeded in depriving her of Griffith and Owen, the two youngest of them; but Emma retained the two eldest, Madoc and Llewelyn in her own hands. However, finding herself subjected to a long and harassing system of annoyance from these kindred, mental disquietude on this account, and the difficulty she found in maintaining her own jointure, so wrought upon her firmness, that at length she resolved upon a measure more fatal to her interests than the most cruel machinations of her enemies could have devised. "She thought it expedient to transfer the care of them to king Edward I., alleging that their ancestors had sworn fealty to the king of England, and that they were feudally his wards. Edward accepted their wardship, and committed Madoc to the care of John, earl Warren, and Llewelyn to Roger Mortimer, third son of Ralph Mortimer (second husband of Gwladys Ddu), lord of Wigmore. It will be observed that these children had a portion of

their late father's estates assigned them; Madoc the elder, the lordships of Bromfield and Yale,\* and had a claim to the reversion of Moldsdale, Hopesdale, and *Maelor Saes-naeg*, his mother's jointure, and detached part of Flintshire before described. Llewelyn, the second son, had allotted to him the lordships of Chirk and Nathewdwy—no small temptations to guardians who bore them but little regard. However, we are informed that earl Warren built the castle of Holt in Bromfield—and Roger Mortimer the castle of Chirk—and placed English garrisons in each of them, ostensibly to protect the property of those children from their father's relations, but in reality to keep them for themselves—for the unhappy children were doomed from the hour they fell into the custody of their English guardians.

Pennant remarks on the English king's cruel policy—on the death of Griffith ab Modoc, Edward I. ungratefully bestowed on John earl Warren the wardship of the eldest son of his old partizan†—as he did that of the second on Roger Mortimer. *Both guardians understood the meaning of the favour; and accordingly made away with the poor children, and gained full possession of their estates.* Yorke, in his royal tribes of Wales, says, “and, as it might happen, the wards were missed—and no more found.

—————Tall, erantes arte pupillos,  
Rursus ut ad patrias nunquam rediers penates.

*Pentarchia.*

“What manner of death they suffered is unknown; tradition says they were drowned in the night in the river Dee, at Holt. They perished by some secret and violent death, by the hands of their guardians, without a doubt, who, by the grants of Edward, succeeded generally to their

\* In Welsh written *lâl*.

† Edward I., when prince of Wales and earl of Chester, experienced Griffith ab Madoc's friendship and attachment, and was assisted by him in his attacks upon Wales. For him the unhappy chieftain had to endure the hatred and execrations of his countrymen, and what might be called a long imprisonment in his castle of Dinas Brân, from whence he dared not stir for many years dreading their vengeance as a partizan of the English king. But neither those considerations, nor the eminent services of lord James Audley, father of the lady Emma, availed with that iron hearted destroyer of nations.



estates. Edward, however, participated in the spoil, but it is to be hoped not in the destruction of the wards. Thomas, the biographer of Owen Glendower remarks—"his animosity and vindictive spirit towards the last prince of Wales might justify the insinuation, and his acquittal would be very dubious before a jury of Welshmen."

It appears, further researches and accidental discovery enabled Pennant to correct certain very material errors in the above account, which he does in the following statement.

Historians have been mistaken in supposing that the children who were murdered were the two eldest sons of Griffith ab Madoc;\* they were, in fact, the children of Madoc, Griffith's eldest son; so that in reality, it was her grandsons whom the lady Emma gave to the wardship of the heartless Edward, and whom earl Warren and sir Roger Mortimer caused to be drowned under Holt bridge. What crowns the satisfaction of the settlement of this historical question is the following addition by Pennant:—"This I discovered in a manuscript communicated to me by the reverend Mr. Price, keeper of the Bodleian library. Before that, the manner of the death had been current in the country under the fable of the two fairies who had been destroyed in that manner, and in the same place; but the foundation of the tale was till very lately totally lost. The barbarity of the two guardians, so far from being punished by their master, was rewarded: Warren had the grant of Dinas Brân,\* and all Bromfield, confirmed to him, dated from Rhyddlan, Oct. 7th, 1281; and Mortimer that of Chirk."

To return to the lady Emma—finding herself an object of persecution from the hostility of her late husband's kindred, and being molested in her jointure by them in revenge for having delivered her grandsons to the care of the English,

\* It is evident the children of this chieftain had arrived at manhood before his death—as we find the four sons witnesses to a settlement made by their father on lady Emma, their mother, as before related in this memoir.

† Dinas Brân castle stands on a great height, opposite to the town of Llangollen; its ruins nearly cover the summit of a vast conoid hill, steeply sloped on every side. It was one of the primitive Welsh castles. From the Warrens this property passed by marriage to the Fitzalans, and followed the succession of the lords of Bromfield.

she was thrown into great perplexity. She made application to king Edward to take Maelor Saesnaeg, her jointure into his own possession, and give her lands in England for it, where she could spend the residue of her days in peace. Edward, of course, acquiesced in her desires, and thus got into possession of those noble domains, and held the same ever after. On the death of the lady Emma, these lands should have reverted to her family. But Edward kept both the demesnes of Hopesdale and Maelor Saesnaeg, the latter he annexed to Flintshire under the pretence that the heirs were rebels.

The period of the lady Emma's decease, or any record of what further befel her, is unknown. Doubtless she discovered, when too late to recal the past, that the greatest error of her life was attaching too high an opinion to the character of her sovereign, by giving her grandchildren to his protection. When, in the evening of life and the solitude of a sorrowing old age, she had to endure the agony of reflecting on this false step, which brought the poor children to a premature and cruel death—and the contrast presented in the safety and happiness of those who remained in Wales, under the guardianship of her husband's kindred—it is probable that poignancy of her grief made her latter days so extremely wretched, that her prospect of the grave was more soothing than severe.

Pennant adds, Warren usurped the property of Madoc, but was seized with remorse for his crime, and instead of removing the other object of his fear, as a Machiavelian politician would have done, procured from Edward a grant of Glyndyfrdwy to Griffith, the third son of Emma and Griffith ab Madoc, dated from Rhyddlan, 12th February, 1292. Griffith held his lordship under the king of England in chieftly, and was, by the Welsh, called *y Barwn Gwyn*, or the white baron. He possessed also his deceased brother Owen's portion of Cynllaeth, and so in descent to Owen Glendower.

Wynne, in his history of Wales, says, "Griffith's wife had in her possession for her dowry, Maelor Saesneg, Hopesdale, and Mouldsale, with the presentation of Bangor rectory."

Elsewhere he observes, "seeing two of her sons disinherited and done away, and the fourth dead without issue, and doubting lest Griffith, her only surviving child, could not long continue, she conveyed her estate to the Audleys, her own kin, who, getting possession of it, took the same from the king. From the Audleys it came to the house of Derby, where it continued a long time, till sold to Sir John Glynne, sergeant-at-law, where it still continueth."

Thus by this unfortunate arrangement, Griffith, the third son of Emma and Griffith ab Madoc, was deprived of that portion of his inheritance, but succeeded to the lordship of Glyndwrwy, and became the great great grandfather of Owen Glendower, as thus. He was the father of Madoc Crupl, or the cripple, who was the father of Madoc Vychan, who was father of Griffith Vychan, who was the father of Owen Glendower.

## ESSYLLT,

SOLE DAUGHTER AND HEIRESS OF CYNAN TYNDAETHWY, KING  
OF NORTH WALES, AND QUEEN OF MERVYN VYRCH, KING  
OF ALL WALES AND THE ISLE OF MAN.

TO ACCOUNT for the marriage of this princess with the king of the Isle of Man, we must commence by relating some incidents which took place in the reign of her father. Cynan Tyndaethwy, king of north Wales, was disturbed in his government by the hostility of his brother Howel, who claimed of him a division of the sovereignty, and to have the island of Anglesea for his own share. Sensibly aware of the impolicy of such a measure, and its certain tendency to weaken the nation when opposed to a foreign power, as fatally proved in after years by his grandson Roderic's adoption, the king resolutely opposed a scheme so pregnant with national disasters. Howel, equally tenacious of what he considered his right, according to the law of gavelkind (so fatal to monarchies and excellent in republics—the ultimate ruin of Wales), determined to compel his brother to yield him that portion of his dominions. The brothers met in arms, and in two hard-fought battles Howel came off victorious, and for a while held the sovereignty of Anglesea in defiance of Cynan. But, in a third engagement between them, Howel was overthrown, and being compelled to fly his country, became a ruined, homeless refugee.

Ireland, or the Isle of Man, appeared to be the only countries where a Welsh prince under such unfortunate circumstances could meet entertainment and protection, and to the latter island Howel bent his course. The Isle of Man was then ruled by Mervyn Vyrch, a prince of very amiable character, courteous manners, and of similar royal descent with his own family. He was the son of Gwyriad ab Elidure, descended from Belinus, the brother of Brennus, one of the early kings of Britain. His mother was Nest, daughter of



Cadell the son of Brochwell Yscythraeg, king of Mathravel, or Powys. Mervyn received the unhappy prince with the utmost urbanity, kindness, and hospitality. The revenues of certain lordships in the north of the island were assigned for his maintenance, and every attention that a noble mind could suggest, to ameliorate the severities of fortune, were with studied delicacy accorded him. This honourable treatment wrought powerfully on the mind of Howel; overwhelmed with gratitude towards his generous host, he suggested to Mervyn that he should seek the hand of his niece the princess Essyllt, sole heiress of his brother Cynan Tindaethwy, king of north Wales, in marriage. Speedily acting on this advice, and following the instructions of Howel, Mervyn wooed, won, and married the lady. Howel died in the fifth year of his exile in the Isle of Man, which was A.D. 822. He survived his brother the king of north Wales about two years; and so far from yielding to any suggestions of ambition to seize on the vacant throne, as a less generous prince might have done, he seems to have found a superior pleasure in seeing his niece and friend enthroned in that sovereignty.

It is pleasant to contemplate, in rude times like these, such an instance of a naturally turbulent and ambitious mind overcome by a sense of obligation, and yielding to the dictates of friendship and the most refined notions of honour.

Thus, on the death Cynan Tindaethwy, about the year 820, the princess Essyllt and her husband Mervyn Vyrch became the king and queen of north Wales and the Isle of Man, which were united into one sovereignty. To prevent the jealousy and discontent commonly entertained by a semi-barbarous people against a prince or princess not native born, the government was carried on under the joint names of Mervyn Vyrch and Essyllt.

Of personal memoirs we have scarcely anything more to relate of this princess, but by her position in joint sovereignty, and perhaps in the executive department of the government, her life may be supposed to be completely mixed up with the public affairs of the day. Her existence was passed



amidst the most stirring events ever recorded in the annals of her country—when Danish irruptions and Saxon invasions scarcely allowed an interval of peace to either the Britons or their assailants.

The contemporary Saxon sovereign of this period was that ever restless wielder of the battle-brand and desolating war-torch, Egbert,\* king of the west Saxons. The personal character and great abilities of this prince rendered the epoch not only remarkable in a high degree, but to the Britons it was the most terrible and disastrous ever experienced by them since the landing of Hengist and Horsa. The public events of her father's time and her own compose a chain of the most dire national evils, of which each link is a calamity, that hitherto had ever befallen their nation.

In her father's reign, and the early part of her own and partner's, the important cities of Shrewsbury and Chester, and a considerable circuit of country, embracing many districts attached to each, were torn for ever from the Welsh; the British inhabitants slaughtered or driven thence, and repopled by the Saxons. The island of Mona was seized in the same manner, and to make its conquest the more memorable, the name was changed to Anglesea, or the Englishmen's isle—which, although reconquered in after time, it has retained ever since. Her father's contemporary was the barbarous and butchering Offa, king of Mercia, who caused the deep dyke and high rampart bearing his name to be made. It extended a hundred miles over the rocks and mountains, across valleys and rivers, from the waters of the Dee to the mouth of the Wye, where the latter falls into the Severn. The only season of peace sought, or acceded to, by Offa, was for the insidious purpose of finishing this infamous dyke unmolested; the purpose of which was, to divide the fair and fertile portion of the country, that had been torn from the Welsh and seized by the Saxons, from the stark and sterile mountainous regions, to which he meditated to

\* Although Egbert failed in conquering the Britons, he succeeded in mastering all the kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy, and united them all into one under his own sovereignty—and then, for the first time, ordered his dominions to be called England, and his subjects Englishmen.

confine them, and made it penal, under terrible consequences (often exacted), to pass its boundary. To revenge himself on the Welsh who had despised his dyke, and levelled it for considerable length, Offa with a strong army sought their forces. "Both parties coming at length to a general engagement upon Rhuddlan Marsh, the Welsh, under the command of Caradoc, a chieftain of the country, were entirely defeated, with a dreadful slaughter, and their leader slain in the action. Besides this great loss which the Welsh had suffered, the Saxon prince commanded all the children and the men who had fallen into his hands to be massacred, the women scarcely escaping his fury."\*

In the year 808, twelve years before the accession of Essyllt to her father's throne, in the course of one of the Saxon invasions, the city of St. David's was laid in ashes by that remorseless people. That event was preceded by an eclipse of the sun and moon—a terrible distemper likewise seized upon the cattle—and the next year the city of Diganwy was destroyed by lightning. These incidents, arising from natural causes, were marked by superstition as presages of national calamity."†

Matthew of Westminster recites no less than two invasions of Wales by Egbert in the years 810 and 811, and in the year 819 he again over-ran the dominions of the Britons with a powerful army, "desolated the country as far as the mountains of Snowdon, and seized on the lordship of Rhynoniac. He then advanced to Mona and took possession of that island, having fought a bloody battle with the Welsh at Lanvaes, near Beaumaris. It was at this period, as before related, that the island irrecoverably lost its ancient name. This formidable inroad was no sooner over, as if the Welsh

\* Warrington. The memory of the massacre of Morva Rhuddlan is preserved in an ancient Welsh ballad attached to an air of singular pathos. Theophilus Jones, the Breconshire historian, relates, that when this was played by a Welsh harper before Colonel Shebbert, a venerable foreign officer settled in that country, that the old gentleman was affected to tears, declaring that he was certain the powerful pathetic music which he heard commemorated the defeat of a great army.

† From this time Diganwy ceased to be the residence of the kings of north Wales.

were to enjoy no interval of peace, than Kenulph, king of Mercia, in two successive inroads, committed great devastation in west Wales and in Powys.

Matthew of Westminster mentions another invasion of Wales, in the year 830, in which he partially subdued the country, and made its kings tributary. The Welsh, in excessive resentment of these numerous invasions, in the year 833 allied themselves with a Danish army which then invaded the Saxon territory, "as the less and more distant evil, to wreak their vengeance on the Saxons, and to establish the Danish power on the ruin of their more immediate and hereditary enemies."

In consequence of this alliance, the Welsh joined their forces with the Danes, and after having ravaged a great part of his dominions, and destroyed many of his castles and fortified towns, they fought a severe battle with the Saxon prince upon Hengist Down; but in this action they sustained a terrible defeat, with the slaughter of a great part of their army.

In 835, to revenge himself on the Welsh for their combination against him with his mortal enemies the Danes, Egbert invested Chester, the chief city of ancient Vendotia, in Welsh called *Caerlleon Ddwrddwy*, one of the most important posts on the British frontiers. Having taken the city, he caused the brazen effigies or statues of Cadwallon, king of Britain, with which the town was adorned, to be pulled down and defaced—forbidding, on pain of death, the erecting of such again.

We are too apt, like the ancient historians and chroniclers of our country, to overlook the effect of female influence in political and warlike doings; but were the real parts which that sex look in these transactions duly recorded, it is probable we should find many of the vaunted warriors of the day in the position of puppets—the wires that set them in motion being guided by the fertile head and dexterous hand of a woman. We are told, in the present instance, that Egbert was influenced in his excessive severity against the Welsh citizens of Chester, by the inveterate malice of his wife Redburga, whose hatred of the Welsh almost amounted

to frenzy. The merciless pair united their venom in a proclamation, as cruel as it was unavailing, commanding that all the men, with their wives and children, who were descended from British blood, should depart their territories in six months on pain of death. And to add injury to insult, Egbert promulgated another law, as savage and useless as the former, which affixed the penalty of death to every Welshman who passed the limits of Offa's dyke and should be taken on the English borders. But he did not live to see these barbarities put into execution, but died very soon after the conquest of Chester. "His death," says Warrington, "probably suspended for several ages the destiny of Wales."

"A short cessation of the Danish inroads gave leisure to Berthred, the tributary sovereign of Mercia, to renew hostilities against the Welsh, and a severe battle was fought, in 843, by the two princes, at a place called Kettel, upon the frontiers, in which Mervyn, the prince of north Wales, was slain. Her son Roderic the Great succeeding to the sovereignty, the widowed princess Essyllt,\* as queen dowager, it is probable, lived the remainder of her days in the quietude of obscurity; but the particulars of her after life, and the period of her death remain alike unrecorded.

\* In Bassett's "Antiquarian Researches," an excellent work on Glamorgan-shire Genealogy, commenced in 1846, we have the following pedigree of this royal lady:—"Essyllt, sole daughter and heiress of Cynan Tyndaethwy, being thirteen generations from Coel-godebog (father of the empress Helena). We must now give a genealogy of this princess by way of ascent up to Cynedda Wledig. Her father, Cynan Tyndaethwy, lived about A.D. 770, and was the son of Rodri Molwynog (the raging or foaming Roderic) who reigned about 710, and was the son of Cadwalader Fendiglad, living about 680, and was the son of Cadwallon, living about 640; he was the son of Cadvan, who flourished about 603, and was the son of Jago ab Bell, living in 565, and was the son of Bell, living in 555, and was the son of Rhun, living in 555, and was the son of Maelgwn Gwynedd, who lived about 520, and was the son of Caswallon Lawhir, living about 470, who was the son of Elinon Yrth (Elinon the resister), living about 420, who was the son of Cynedda Wledig aforesaid, living about 370." Cynedda Wledig was the son of Edeyrn, the husband of Gwawl, or Julia, the sister of the empress Helena.



## MEGAN VERCH EVAN,

OR MARGARET EVANS OF PENLLYN.

MEGAN VERCH EVAN,\* or Margaret Evans, of *Penllyn* (lake head), was a very extraordinary character; and, although occupying but a homely position in life, as the human race are all creatures of circumstances, it is not uninteresting to surmise what she might have been had fortune cast her lot in another sphere and era, and given a fair field to her genius. It is undeniable that this rustic heroine of a comparatively lowly lot possessed more of what is called the master mind than many who have been born to empire, swaying the fate of nations, and conducting them to eminence and glory.

The only written account which we have met of her is in the pages of Pennant's "*Tour in North Wales*," where her tastes, talents, capacities and qualifications, are enumerated more in the style of an auctioneer's catalogue than anything resembling a biographical memoir. He says, "near this end of the lake (of *Lanberris*) lives a celebrated personage, whom I was disappointed in not finding at home. This was Margaret verch Evan, of *Penllyn*, the last specimen of the strength and spirit of the British fair. She is at this time (the year 1786) about ninety years of age. This extraordinary female was the greatest hunter, shooter, and fisher of her time. She kept a dozen, at least, of dogs, terriers, greyhounds, and spaniels, all excellent in their kinds. She killed more foxes in one year than all the confederate hunts do in ten; rowed stoutly in a boat, and was queen of the lake; fiddled excellently, and knew all our old music; did not neglect the mechanic arts, for she was a very good joiner, boat builder, harp maker, blacksmith, and shoemaker.

\* Megan or Margaret verch Evan, signifies Megan daughter of Evan; she is further designated "of *Penllyn*," from her house being situated at the head of the lake of *Lanberris*, at the foot of *Snowdon*.



She shod her own horses, made her own shoes, and built her own boats while she was under contract to convey the copper ore down the lakes. At the age of seventy she was the best wrestler in the country, and few young men dared to try a fall with her. She had once a maid servant of congenial qualities—but death, that mighty hunter, at last earthed this faithful companion of hers. It must not be forgotten that all the neighbouring bards paid their addresses to Megan, and celebrated her exploits in pure British verse. At length she gave her hand to the most effeminate of all her admirers, as if pre-determined to maintain the superiority which nature had bestowed on her."

Recurring again to the consideration of what this homely heroine might have been under other and more favouring circumstances, we shall venture to steer our course into the region of probabilities, and contemplate her in certain elevated positions.

The late Louis Philippe, king of the French, was in his day emphatically styled the Napoleon of peace, with equal justice, in the estimation of philosophy, might not this wonderful woman be designated the Boadicea of humble life? Of such materials, mental and bodily, as gave being to Megan verch Evan, most assuredly was that ancient British heroine composed, and under different auspices these extraordinary females might have changed places; the same might be said of the doughty Sarah, duchess of Marlborough, and even of the greatly capable, firm willed, and ready witted queen Elizabeth.

Let us imagine Megan verch Evan, with her manifold and wonderful capacities, born in another land, and coming in contact with the great Peter of Russia, under similar circumstances with the Swedish corporal's widow—and this is a fairer parallel than might at first appear; for our intrepid Welsh woman's condition through life was much superior to Catherine's original state.\* The strong but coarse mind of Peter did not revolt against the circumstances of degra-

\* For a *real* account of Catherine, see Voltaire's History of Charles XII., and of Peter the Great, and especially the graphic memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith. The wretched rubbish in general circulation in England, called the

dation in which he found the fair Swede, as the mistress of the ennobled cook's boy, prince Menzikoff, but captivated by her native graces, transferred her to his own palace, and kept her in the same capacity till her merits became developed, when he espoused and made her his empress. It is probable that Catherine in early life was really handsome, and a very graceful little woman—and the credit of a good address is generally conceded to her; but with the proverbial *penchant of tall men* for diminutive women, it is likely the czar exaggerated her claims to high regard. With the exception of her *fortunate hit*, which extricated Peter from the disasters of Pultowa, it is probable her other merits were to be sought for, like those of the majority of her sex, in the peculiar taste and imagination of her admirer.

The Margravine of Bareith, with little respect for the romance in which her history had arrayed her,\* strips away the trappings of fancy, and exhibits her as she appeared at the court of Prussia—a dumpy little woman, overdecked with ornaments, but somewhat of an economist in soap and water.† According to the traditions of north Wales, Megan verch Evan was tall, firm set, and of a noble presence. What a congenial partner would she have been for such a man, who, of all others, would have valued those original but

\* "Life of Catherine," appears to have been concocted by some insipid spinster to suit the taste of those squeamish members of the frivolous classes, who rejoice in the attributes of *fine-ladyism* as opposed to true womanhood—parallels and points of contrast we are never tired of showing up, to the glory of the latter. The spurious life of Catherine has been industriously divested of historic facts, and filled with *polite fictions*—which makes it a worthy companion for that shallow piece of desecration, the "Family Shakspeare," a darling object of patronage among inane dowagers and drawingroom dawdles."

\* It is a matter both of surprise and regret that the so-called life of Catherine I. of Russia, in the pages of that excellent periodical, Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, deviates strangely from the correctness which usually distinguish the articles in that work. It is, though elegantly written, no exception to other fanciful and spurious "lives" of this princess, a *polite fiction*, but would appropriately come under the head of the romance of biography.

† The witty and satirical Margravine represents Catherine as overloaded with the portraits of Russian saints, which jingled as she walked, and gave a rather lively idea of a *trotting mule in harness*.

masculine qualifications, so repulsive to the generality of mankind. And what an empress of Russia Megan would have made! especially after burying the autocrat, when her genius might soar uncontrolled. Even the second Catherine might have been surpassed in her better course, that of emulating the reform spirit of the great Peter; but in her darker deeds Catherine was, doubtless, unapproachable.

But, alas! for Megan, poor Megan—great Megan—limited as she was to a lowly sphere, and playing a small part in the great drama of human existence, she was above the frailties of either of these empresses, guiltless of the crimes and cruelty of the last, dying in the esteem of all whom she valued—and not one, of all the earth, “to the last syllable of recorded time,” will ever curse her memory. Oh! happy contrast in the humble heroine of the lowly cot.

## FLEER,

THE DAUGHTER OF MYGNACH THE DWARF, AND WIFE OF  
CASWALLAWN AB BELI, THE CASSIVELAUNUS OF ROMAN  
HISTORY.

THIS lady belongs to a very early epoch in our national history, and was not only coeval with, but said to have been the original cause of the earliest invasion of this country by the Romans.

Fleer\* was the daughter of a dwarf named Mygnach Cor, and, although her father might have been considered as one of the least comely of mankind, his daughter is said to have shone very the paragon of the female beauties of her time.

One of the Celtic or Gaulish kings of Gascony, called Murchan Lleidr, or Murchan the thief, has had his memory consigned to infamy for his heinous offences against this ancient British beauty. This contemptible king of the Gascons, dreading the arms of the Romans, who had already made conquests in Gaul, and incapable of acting the hero in defence of his nation, found it easier and more congenial to his ignoble nature to play the parasite and sycophant to Julius Cæsar, distinguished himself in the capacity of a royal pimp to that imperial terror of the barbaric world.

The celebrity of Fleer having reached the continent, probably carried thither by the bards and minstrels of the time, her fame for surpassing beauty at length became known to king Murchan. This amiable specimen of Gascon royalty then determined on a personal visit to our island, to ascertain whether this reputed beauty was equal to the extravagant eulogies floating amidst popular report. But nothing could be less royal either in its motives or appointments than the sinister visit of king Murchan. Instead of entering

\* In Welsh written Flûr, but pronounced as above.



The Welsh, however, in addition to the chastisement inflicted by the army of Caswallawn, avenged themselves on the Gascon king by affixing to his name the stigma which has clung to it for ages, and may distinguish it while the letters and languages of this isle exist, of Murchan Leidr, or Murchan the thief.

The beautiful Fleer, the lady whose transcendent charms on this occasion put sixty-one thousand men in motion to avenge her abduction, and probably as many to commit and uphold the deed, unfortunately became the direct cause of what was then considered the direst evil that could befall her country, the invasion and ultimate conquest of Britain by the legions of Rome.

Although we have this instance of a hostile visit made by a British army to Gaul, it appears that the Britons had more frequently been the friends and allies of that country, and rendered it the most efficient aid against the Roman invaders. But as this expedition, for the liberation of Fleer, being the greatest army ever sent from the shore of Britain, was directed against a tributary state, the presumed friend and ally of Rome, both that circumstance and the magnitude of the armament combined to give umbrage to Julius Cæsar. That great commander and statesman saw at once the necessity of bringing Britain under Roman control, as an additional security for his Gallic conquests and the fidelity of the Gauls. Cæsar's own account partially confirms this view of his motives, wherein he states that it was in consideration of the assistance which the Britons rendered the Gauls in their battles with the Romans that determined him on the subjugation of the island. "Some of the enemies of Cæsar, glancing at his notorious avarice, raised a report that the beauty and costliness of British pearls, with which some of our rivers then abounded, was in reality the principal motive for his invasion,"\* which taken literally was a very puerile insinuation, but we are told that this was only a poetical metaphor, signifying the female beauties of Britain, the celebrity of whom was then vivid and in general

\* Dr. Owen Pugh's *Cambrian Biographical Dictionary*.



circulation, like the fame of Circassian beauties of modern times, founded on the eventful circumstances connected with the adventures of Fleer, the lady of this memoir.

Caswallawn ab Beli, the distinguished lover and afterwards the husband of the lovely Fleer, was the most celebrated chieftain of his time, and proved, with his gallant Britons, a most formidable opponent to the invading legions of Rome. He is mentioned with respect in Roman annals by the latinized name of Cassivelaunus—while in the historical Triads of his own country, his importance as a great and active leader in the most perilous times is strikingly recorded.

After conquering king Murchan, Caswallawn is stated to have entered his presence in a golden car, whence he stands recorded in the Triads as one of the three royal possessors of a golden car. In another of those vehicles of primitive history he is celebrated as one of the three eminently faithful lovers of the isle of Britain.

In one Triad he is stated to have been one of the three elected chiefs of battle, or generalissimo, for the purpose of opposing the legions of Cæsar, being the first instance of the kind recorded in British history. Dr. Owen Pughe remarks on this Triad—"whatever impression the disciplined legions of Rome might have made on the Britons in the first instance, the subsequent departure of Cæsar they considered as a cause of joyful triumph; and it is stated that Caswallawn proclaimed an assembly of the various states of the island for the purpose of celebrating that event by feasting and public rejoicing."

In another Triad, Caswallawn is recorded to have been one of the three GOOD PERSECUTORS of the isle of Britain, on account of the long and harrassing warfare in which he persevered, to the grievous annoyance of the Romans, whom he aimed to sicken of residing in this island after its partial conquest.

## SAINT FRAID,

ST. BRIDE, OR ST. BRIDGET, PATRONESS OF THE CHURCHES OF  
LLANSANTFRAID, ST. BRIDE'S, AND ST. BRIDGET'S.

THE name of this saint, and the numerous churches dedicated to her in Wales, under the designation of Llansantfraid, point to a period when the public mind was more impressed with veneration for supposed guardian angels and peculiar protecting saints, than agitated with matters of commercial enterprize, or any of those laudable schemes for improving the worldly condition of mankind, which in after-times distinguished the inhabitants of this island. In those dreamy days Wales might have vied with Spain and Portugal in their saint-admiring propensities—and, doubtless, there was no small matter of discussion that served to keep the national mind languidly awake respecting the supposed merits of some saints in preference to others.

The two principal favourites in Wales, as patron saints, next to Dewi, or St. David himself, appear to have been St. Michael the archangel, to whom are dedicated all those churches bearing the name of Llanvihangel, and St. Fraid, the subject of this memoir, to whom so many sacred edifices and parishes owe their designation.

Saint Fraid is the same pious personage who is known in England as St. Bridget and St. Bride, to whom the churches bearing those names have been devoted or dedicated.

To the valuable researches of our respected contemporary, the Rev. Robert Williams, editor of that excellent work, the "Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen," which every patriot Welshman ought to possess, we stand indebted for the following information respecting the lady saint of this memoir :—

"According to the ancient records quoted in *Bonedd y Saint*, she was the daughter of Cadwrthai, or Cadwthlach Wyddel, otherwise Dwyppws ab Cevyth. The Irish ac-

THE

# HEROINES OF WELSH HISTORY ;

OR,

## *Memoirs of the Celebrated Women of Wales.*

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**PARTS THE FOURTH AND FIFTH.**

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counts state that she was born at Fochard, in the county of Louth, about A.D. 453, and that she was the illegitimate daughter of Dubtach, or Dubtachus, a man of considerable rank in his country. When she grew up, no importunities could prevail upon her to enter the married state, so she took the veil from the hands of St. Meb, a disciple and nephew of St. Patrick, who received her profession and vow of perpetual virginity.

"She formed a religious community of her companions who had been veiled with her, which increased so much, that she was obliged to erect several nunneries in many different parts of Ireland. Her fame spread through the British isles, and besides the numerous churches dedicated to her in Wales, there are several in England and Scotland, also in the Isle of Man, and especially in the Hebrides, near to Isla, a celebrated monastery was built to her honour, called Brigidiani.

"Iorwyth Vynglwyd, a Welsh poet of the fifteenth century, has put her legend in verse, with the miracles attributed to her, which are printed in "Williams's History of Aberconwy."\* It is also to be found in English verse, in a work entitled "a Friend of Irish Saints;" Patrick, Columba, and Bright, published at Louvain in 1647. Among other wonders it is said that she sailed over from the Irish coast on a green turf, and landing near Holyhead, at the spot now known as Towyn y Capel; the ~~spot~~ <sup>spot</sup> became a green hillock, on which she caused a chapel to be built which was called after her name."†

Here it appears to us exceedingly curious how a reputed holy personage, long before her appearance among her Welsh admirers, could have become so astonishingly popular, so intensely venerated for her imagined sanctity, as to inspire the people of every district in this country with a determination to build churches and chapels, and to dedicate them to this Irish abbess and saint. But the poetic legend and attributed

\* An octavo volume published at Denbigh in 1835.

† "See an interesting account of Towyn y Capel, in the Journal of the Archaeological Institute, III, 223, by the Hon. W. Owen Stanley."—*Williams's Biographical Dictionary*.

miracles explain all. In those palmy days of priestly imposture, human credulity, and the general prostration of intellect among the people, we can conceive with what ardour the simple population listened to the legends setting forth the virtues of living saints, residing in remote places; the more remote the better, as, even in that period of the infancy of human reason, a saint or a prophet was more honored afar than at home. No statement, however improbable or impossible, was too gross for the gullibility of the childish public, a miracle sanctioned and reconciled everything; and woe to him who dared to express a doubt: he became the object of priestly vengeance, and a general mark of reprobation and persecution. To return again to Mr. Williams's account of the subject of this memoir; he says—

“That she visited Wales at some period seems corroborated by the great veneration paid to her, for there are no less than eighteen churches and chapels dedicated to her in the Principality, viz.—Disserth, in Flintshire; Llansantfraid Glan Conwy, and Llansantfraid Glynceiriog, in Denbighshire; Llansantfraid in Mechain, Montgomeryshire; Llansantfraid Glyn Dwrdu, in Merionethshire; St. Bride's, in Pembroke-shire; Llansantfraid, in Cardiganshire; Llansantfraid Cwm-mwd Deuddwr, and Llansantfraid in Elvael, Radnorshire; Llansantfraid, in Breconshire; St. Bride's Major, St. Bride's Minor, and St. Bride's super Elai, in Glamorganshire; St. Bride or Llansantfraid, Skenfret, St. Bride's in Netherwent, and St. Bride's Wentloog, in Monmouthshire; besides Capel Llansantfraid, now in ruins near Holyhead.

Saint Fraid, St. Bride, or St. Bridget, died on the 1st of February, A.D. 525, on which day, in Roman Catholic countries, her memory is celebrated.” \*

\* “There was another St. Bridgid or Saint Bridget of Sweden, who is often confounded with her, but she lived many ages later.”—*Williams's Biographical Dictionary*.

## GENERAL NOTES TO SAINT FRAID.

Our ancient British saints are said to be held in an inferior degree of repute. In comparison with those whom Rome delights to honour, in consequence of the reputed non-payment of their canonization fees, although some of them have been admitted into the Roman calendar. This omission truly might well have been excused, as the requisition of such fees had not been established *until ages after their era*. However, to exhibit fairly the comparative merits of the two systems of saint-making we extract the following from Sir Culling Eardly's "Romanism in Italy."

TEN THOUSAND POUNDS FOR MAKING A SAINT;—"THE  
BEATIFICATION OF MARIA FRANCESCA."

This is one of the cases where I need not name my authority, for the Roman Catholic Institute does not question the fact. I have been credibly informed that the beatification of this person cost the king of Naples ten thousand pounds sterling, which must have been expended, on the showing of the Institute, partly in "a spiritual process," and partly in a gorgeous ceremonial.

Let us approach, however, the merits of the system of canonization, or recognising persons as saints. In the Bible the name of saint is given to every holy man. Error, however, began to creep in at an early period of Christian antiquity. Dupin, in his Ecclesiastical History of the tenth Century, says that "in the primitive church it was given to all christians in their life-time, and even after their death, when they died in communion of the church, having preserved their innocence of baptism." A more particular respect was shown to martyrs; and, in process of time, the memory of virgins, anchorites, and bishops, renowned for their sanctity, were likewise honoured; and lastly the memory of those persons whose singular virtues were remarkable in their life-time. Their names were inserted in the diptych, and were recited at the altar, and they were styled by the title of "Saints," and "blessed." Every particular church used to place in that rank those who had propagated the christian religion, the bishops, and those who had lived in great reputation for their sanctity. Afterwards calendars and martyrologies of the saints of several particular churches were made, which were by little and little dispersed through the eastern and western parts. The Church of Rome, as others had done, made use of these martyrologies, from which Ado composed his, and afterwards that of Usuardus. Some time elapsed before anything like authority was assumed in this matter. Dupin proceeds to say "it does not appear that before the tenth century any solemn decrees were made at Rome or elsewhere for the canonization of the saints. Indeed the custom was entirely established in the eleventh century. Pope Alexander III. first reserved to himself the canonization of saints as a matter of great consequence." In 1587 Sixtus V. established 'the congregation of rites,' to take cognizance inter alia of all canonizations. Under the arrangements made by him canonizations are now conducted. *What a lesson does the above history teach us! When men once leave the Bible, where will they stop? The church began by using the word 'saint' in an unscriptural sense, and has ended in demanding ten thousand pounds sterling for the expence of canonization."*

It appears that at one period the English entertained the whimsical fancy of having that wretched puppet of sovereignty, their Henry VI., made a saint. The enormous demands made by popedom for his intended canonization fortunately brought John Bull to his senses, and caused him to button up his breeches pocket with the utmost indignation at the undisguised attempt to over-

reach him in a matter of barter, where the value to be received appeared so ludicrously insignificant in proportion to the high price demanded. Although, for the sake of dramatic effect, Shakespeare has shown the miserable Henry of Windsor in the light of a pious character, history more truly depicts him like his maternal grandfather, Charles VI. of France, whose malady he inherited, merely as a royal idiotic driveller; remarkable also for incapacity for all the purposes of life, and at a period when the highest abilities were requisite to support him on the throne usurped by his grandfather. But in spite of the short comings of this wretched specimen of exalted humanity, Henry, it seems, had his admirers, who deemed him worthy of being sainted; and as the poor thing had the merit of being harmless, he would doubtless have made a far more respectable saint than many devoid of that negative characteristic, who have the questionable honour of a place in the Roman Catholic Calendar.

## THE LADY HAWYS GADARN,

GREAT GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF OWEN CYVEILIOG, GREAT  
GRANDDAUGHTER OF GWENWYNWYN, SOVEREIGN PRINCE  
OF POWYS; AND DAUGHTER OF OWEN AB GRIFFITH.

HAWYS GADAEN, or Hawys the intrepid, acquired the latter designation by executing a feat of spirited resolution, which well deserved whatever honor that appellation was intended to convey. Her mother died during her infancy; she was brought up and educated under the care and immediate inspection of her father, at her paternal home, Castell Coch, or the Red Castle,\* which was the original name of Powys Castle; the residence of the sovereign princes of Powys, of whom Owen ab Griffith was the lineal living descendant.

By the evil working of the law of Gavel-kind, which had been convulsing the country and destroying its peace ever since its enactment, by the decree of Roderic the Great, the sovereignty of Powys had at this time become a matter ridiculous to contemplate. Besides the subdivision of the principality in the different generations preceding him, the five brothers of Owen ab Griffith claimed of him a new and equal division of the principality of Powys, in six several proportions, of which he was to retain only one. The natural jealousy attending such a distribution of allotments, made the supremacy of an elder brother, in such a case, far from an enviable position; especially when the irascibility of ill regulated minds in a state of semi-barbarism from perpetual civil broils is taken into consideration.

Probably annoyed beyond endurance by their turbulent opposition to his measures, disdaining the foolery of such petty sovereignty, and perhaps, sagaciously foreseeing the impending conquest of the country by the English, Owen ab Griffith came to a resolution as singular for its originality, as it ultimately proved wise and beneficial to his posterity; although to the eyes of his countrymen it ap-

\* So called from the colour of the stones of which it was built.



peared at first nothing less than treason against his native land. The father of Hawys repaired to the parliament held at Shrewsbury, and resigned his domains and title to the English King Edward I. and received them again of him, to hold *in capite* and free Baronage, according to the custom of England. By this act, it is true, he extinguished his sovereignty, and became a mere English nobleman; but then he probably exchanged tranquillity for empty state, and security both against foreign foes, domestic jars, and fraternal treachery. By this arrangement he baffled the cupidity of those marauding English knights and nobles who warred for prey, and laid their account in dispossessing the native proprietors, and obtaining a *gracious* grant of their domains from the king. He also secured to himself and daughter a protection against the combinations and rapacity of his brothers.

Soon after this act of abdication of sovereignty, Owen ab Griffith died, leaving his only child, his daughter Hawys, an orphan, still in her girlhood.

In his last illness, with all the circumspective anxiety of an affectionate parent who was about to leave to the mercy of a harsh world his helpless girl, he devised by his will all his estates and property, still great for a subject, however diminutive for a prince, to his beloved and only daughter Hawys; placing her, until she attained her majority, in the guardianship of her five uncles. Conscious as Owen was of the grasping propensities of his brothers, his sagacity seems rather questionable in such an arrangement. It would seem however, that he naturally calculated that such a plurality of guardians would cause them to become checks upon each other; and that his child was less likely to be wronged by so many, than if under the uncontrolled authority of merely one, or even two of those relatives. But human calculation, grounded on the most sage views of probability, cannot always be secure against the machinations of the selfish and unprincipled; as, unfortunately, was verified in this instance.

The five brothers of the late Owen ab Griffith, and uncles of Hawys, were Llewelyn, John, Griffith Vychan, David, and William Lord of Mawddwy. From some unknown

cause the latter refused to act, as one of the guardians of his niece, therefore the guardianship remained in the hands of her four first-named uncles. From the subsequent conduct of these unworthy abusers of a sacred trust, it would seem their brother William, whose entire conduct proved him a man of unimpeachable probity, excluded by them, was not of their council; or that aware of their duplicity of character, he had purposely alienated himself from them; disdaining to become a participator in any of their schemes of injustice. In this decision he may appear somewhat blameable, as from his known worth and consequent hostility to their selfish and unjust measures, he might have proved their sturdy opponent and an available protector of the rights of his niece and ward. But his quietness of character appears to have unfitted him for contention with those, who agreeing so well together, he knew would always have it in their power to form majorities against him, in any good he might propose, favourable to the rights of Hawys: therefore the prudence of his withdrawal, all things considered, appears unquestionable.

Gratified by the voluntary retirement of their brother William, the four uncles then laid their heads together, and formed a combination to deprive their youthful helpless charge of the possessions assigned by her father's will, which they arranged to divide among themselves, with an intention perhaps, common to such invaders of the property of female orphans, to seclude the poor girl for life in a Nunnery.

In defence of their unworthy proceedings, this junto could certainly plead, that by the laws of Wales, a female was incapable of holding lands in that country, in her own right. The statute of Rhyddlan (12th Edward I.), recites that women were not dowerable by the laws of Wales. But the far-seeing shrewdness of Owen ab Griffith is here strikingly apparent; it was evidently to protect his daughter against this deprivation, that he laid down his titular sovereignty and made himself a subject of the crown of England. Therefore, however tenaciously the guardians of Hawys might cling to the laws and usages of Wales, the laws of England.

to which, by her father's act, she became subjected, protected her claims from the intended spoliation.\*

Young Hawys it appears was naturally gifted with strength of mind, and proved as quick-witted and prudent as she was beautiful. Not being insensible of the great wrong meditated against her by her uncles, she quietly nursed in her bosom a determined purpose of thwarting their probable intentions of injustice whenever circumstances warranted that her suspicions were well founded : and those *worthy guardians* did not keep her long in suspense.

At that time of life when she was emerging from buoyant girlishness into blooming womanhood, it is probable that she sought from them a more liberal pecuniary allowance than she had been accustomed to receive. In answer to their evasive replies, she may have rejoined, with pouting pettishness as to the pressure of her present necessities, and ultimately referred, somewhat pointedly, to the approaching period when their controul would cease, and she should become her own mistress and succeed in her own rights to her father's lands. Such an appeal as this, which her circumstances have warranted us in imagining, would give these amiable relatives the opportunity which they desired of *speaking out*; a task however rendered difficult, by the awe-creating presence of the innocent victim, the helpless girl, whom they had preconcerted to despoil; and it is easily conceivable how the audacity of these hoary elders quailed and lost the flush of insolence before the forceful truthfulness of her just claims. But the evil spirits of covetousness and fraud, in this instance, however abashed at first, unfortunately were of too tough materials to be finally put down, and on

\* Although by the laws of Wales women were not entitled to the dower of the *lands* of the husband, they possessed a proportion of his effects, and that not only upon his death, but immediately upon the marriage; and they had a separate controul, and a sole disposal of their own personal property even during the life of the husband. Theophilus Jones remarks, "so fully was this right recognised that the Welsh married ladies could not be prevailed upon to part with it for nearly two centuries after the English laws were introduced. Several of the wills of testators in Breconshire, from 1500 to 1700 recapitulate and acknowledge debts due from, and to married women; and in others the husband admits that a sum or sums is due to his wife, by mortgage, bond, note, &c."

rallying from their involuntary tribute to the majesty of truth, returned to the charge, trebly weaponed with the rude arms of impudence, insolence, and the assumption of unquestionable authority. At length, it is certain, out they spoke with a vengeance, and apprised her, that as a female, the laws of her native land forbade her the inheritance erroneously devised to her by the will of her father.

Her good uncles may have attempted to sooth her first out-burst of grief and indignation at such a beggaring announcement, as Fraud is ever fond of Religion's tone and semblance to conceal the startling ugliness of her fiendish nakedness, by assuring her of their unchangeable regard for her present and future welfare. That there was still a goodly refuge for her, where with a devout and humbled mind, she might pass her days very happily—namely, the seclusion of a convent. Winding up their edifying discourse with a stern assurance that they had irrevocably destined her for a monastic life, and she must forthwith prepare herself for quitting the world and entering a nunnery.

However the reality of the explanatory scene between Hawys and her guardians may have differed from our conjectures, the result of their conference is on record, and beyond dispute—they utterly denied her right to succeed to her father's domains; and this firm hearted Celtic maiden formed the heroic resolution of escaping from their power, and of throwing herself on the protection of Edward II., the reigning king of England.

It is highly probable that she was counselled to adopt this course by her father, previous to his death, as he doubtless anticipated the possibility of such an emergency; and to this course, it is equally probable, her generous uncle William would have advised her, could they have met and conferred on a subject so momentous to her interests. But in the absence of direct information on the point we can only state what written records have warranted.

It has been shown in the memoir of the Lady Emma wife of Griffith ab Madoc, that it was nothing uncommon for the natives of central Wales, or Powys, when oppressed by their own lords or chieftains, to appeal to the king of

England, to decide their differences ; their ancestors having acknowledged that sovereign as lord paramount of their principality, long before the final conquest of Wales by Edward I. But the resolution of a young female of immature age to fly from her home, and to venture on and persevere in a journey of above two hundred miles ; and to appeal personally to the king, would appear almost too romantic for an historical fact ; and were it not well authenticated, would be almost incredible. It proves, however, that Hawys Gadarn was no maudlin

"Moppet, made of prettiness and pride,  
That oft'ner would her giddy fancies change,  
That glitt'ring dew-drops in the sun do colour."\*

While History is entirely silent as to the particulars of her flight, and the perils she may have encountered on the way, we are not prevented from surmising either their nature or extent. A saddled horse and an armed attendant were the fairest accommodations, that at least, her circumstances could have commanded to aid her undertaking ; and with these, it is not improbable, but she might have been assisted. But in an age when neither turnpike-roads, stage-coaches, nor roadside inns, were existent, and when robbers and desperadoes of many descriptions, were as "plentiful as blackberries" in their season, even with these supposed auxiliaries, her travelling cannot be conceived to have been very felicitous. Her occasional resting places were of course the monasteries, but as these edifices of ancient hospitality were often situated so very far apart, that many of her nights were doubtless spent in the open air, and probably while dozing on her saddle or slumbering on the damp earth. The worthies of her time, however, have recorded their impression of her daring flight and perilous journey, by the cognomen which they bestowed on her—the honourable surname of *Gadarn*, or the intrepid, or enterprizing. The certain accomplishment of her journey, and its felicitous result, has been handed down to us, fairly recorded : she succeeded in being ushered into the presence



of the king, who granted her petition, on the usual terms dictated by English policy, that she should bestow her hand in marriage upon an Englishman.

It would appear that while Hawys was enduring that severest of inflictions on human patience, the tedious waiting for the presentation of her suit and self before the monarch whom she had chosen for her umpire, and to be the redresser of her wrongs, that a certain English nobleman found favour in her eye, and won an interest in her heart. This interesting personage proved to be Sir John Charleton, *valectus regis*, or gentleman of the bed-chamber to King Edward, and a native of Appley in Shropshire.

This young nobleman being from the county adjoining the native country of Hawys (the modern Montgomeryshire), it may be presumed, even if she made a secret of her rank, that he must have felt compassion for the sufferings of a tender female, and admiration for the singular courage of one who had dared, in the face of many dangers and difficulties, to undertake such a journey; independent of a more gentle sentiment, inspired by the free-graces of the dauntless mountain maiden.

This young nobleman, during the uncertainty of her suit, and the dejection incidental to "the law's delay and the insolence of office," courteously soothed and cheered her into confidence; did his utmost in forwarding her wishes, and ultimately ushered her into the royal presence, where her suit, as before stated, was provisionally granted.

When Hawys, for the first time, was known to be a claimant of immense possessions, and a descendant of one of the sovereign-princes of Wales, it doubtless created a considerable sensation among the nobles, from whose order, it was understood, she was at liberty to select her future lord. The *curious in heiresses* among that proverbially hungry race, the courtiers, were immediately roused to an amazing pitch of anxiety. But of all the humming swarm whom the sunshine of fortune induced to buzz their adulatory congratulations on her success, and who strove to recommend themselves to her favour, she encouraged only the modest advances of him who befriended her when only known as

a distressed wanderer from the distant principality of Wales. On a second audience when required by the king to name among his nobles the knight of her choice, for her future lord and champion of her rights, she unhesitatingly, and with smiling frankness, gave her hand to Sir John Charleton. Their union soon followed;\* and to elevate him as a fitting match for the high-born lady, his sovereign created him Lord Powys, of Powys castle, Montgomeryshire; by which title he was summoned to parliament as a member of the House of Lords.

The return of the Lady Hawys, attended by her gallant lord, with a gay and numerous company of knights and ladies, the whole protected by a strong division of men-at-arms, must have formed a striking contrast to her unfriended state on her flight and departure for England. Such an assemblage appearing suddenly at the gates of Powys Castle, may have rather disturbed the serenity of the four old gentlemen-guardians and uncles of this illustrious heroine. It is probable the appearance of the knights and men-at-arms rather intimidated them when required to decamp from their snug quarters, and to yield up every iota of the property of their late ward.

However, notwithstanding the unexpected turn which affairs had taken, the four uncles of Hawys Gadarn determined on resolute resistance, and prepared to take the field in defence of their usurpation. Anticipating such a result on their part from the representations of his lady, who was very capable of entertaining a just estimate of the qualities of her relatives, the gallant and cautious John Charleton had solicited from the king the aid of those troops which he had brought to Wales with him. Assisted by these he commenced hostile movements, and soon broke up their measures; and succeeding in making prisoners of three of his wife's uncles, Llewelyn, John, and David, he placed them in safe custody in the king's castle of Harlech.

Griffith Vychan, the fourth uncle, the most active and influential of the brothers, was still at large; but the new

\* The union of Sir John Charleton with the Lady Hawys took place in the year 1268.

lord of Powys was determined not to rest till he had him also in his custody. According to Wynn, he obtained a writ from the king to the sheriff of Shropshire, and to Sir Roger Mortimer, lord of Chirkland, and justiciary of North Wales, for the apprehension both of Griffith Vychan and his sons-in-law Sir Roger Chamber and Hugh Montgomery, all of whom were then in active hostility against the Lord of Powys and his wife the Lady Hawys.

What seems rather curious in this matter is, to find so many of the English nobility involved in this affair, and in alliance with the refractory uncles, but when the characters of the different parties are considered, our wonder will speedily vanish. Speculation in Welsh heiresses that could give title to lands and lordships, was a very animating principle among the Anglo-Norman barons of this period, secondary only to that of forcible appropriation, according to the sword-in-hand, or robber's law of the day, current then in England for the spoliation of Wales. Aware of the master-passion, the grasping rapacity, which governed the minds of these worthies, it is probable that before the actual marriage of Hawys, these cunning uncles held out prospects to different individuals of winning the hand of their highly dowered niece, with a portion of her lands, as the price of their interference and aid; a promise subjected to deep reservation—either to be evaded altogether, or very stintingly fulfilled, according to the duplicity of such tricksters when their turns are served.

But the restless activity and acute measures of the husband of Hawys frustrated all their schemes, disarmed their opposition, and broke the confederacy to pieces.

In an age when neither an Official Gazette nor the Daily Papers could carry abroad the occurrences at court, the marriage of the lady of our memoir must have remained a considerable time uncertified to the remote districts of the kingdom, which may account for the English partizanship not being sooner withdrawn from the indefatigable Griffith Vychan, the fourth uncle. But when once convinced of the certainty of that event, under the patronage of the king, it is natural to surmise that the English nobility would no

Elienor, who was the sister of Ellen, the mother of our celebrated hero, Owen Glendower, both ladies lineally descended from Rhys ab Tewdwr, king of South Wales, who fell in battle against the Norman invaders of Glamorganshire.

Hawys Gadarn and her English lord proved liberal patrons of the public institutions of their time. Hawys is especially mentioned as a benefactress of monastic establishments; and she is recorded to have made the first movement for the erection of the monastery of the Grey Friars in the town of Shrewsbury.

It appears the lady Hawys departed this life before the year 1353, which was the time of her husband's death, deeply lamented by her family and friends, and regretted by a vast number who had been befriended by her benefactions. She was interred in the convent of the Grey Friars, Shrewsbury.

John Charleton, lord of Powys, had issue by his wife Hawys, a son named John, who enjoyed the lordship about seven years; and then left it to his son of the same name, who was lord of Powys fourteen years. The estate and title then descended to his son, John Charleton the third, who held them twenty-seven years; when dying without issue, the lordship of Powys fell to his brother, Edward Charleton. The particulars of a long train of descendants from this marriage are to be found in Wynne's History of Wales. In our memoir of Lady Mary Herbert in this work may be traced the successors of this family in the lordship of Powys, up to the present possessors, the Clives, descended from the modern hero of England's wars in India.

## ELLEN GETHIN,

DAUGHTER OF VAUGHAN OF HERGEST, HEREFORDSHIRE, AND  
WIFE OF THOMAS AB ROSSER (SON OF SIR ROGER VAUGHAN,  
OF TRETOWER, AND THE LADY GWLADYS,) AND GRANDSON  
OF SIR DAVID GAM.

THE family name of this lady was Vaughan, but a remarkable act of vengeance perpetrated by her in the days of her maidenhood, caused her ever after to be called Ellen Gethin, or Ellen the Terrible. The latter appellation, so far from being intended as a stigma of disgrace, was meant as an honorary designation; and although by her marriage in after years she was entitled to the surname of Rosser, she still retained, proudly as the warrior who is honoured by his sovereign with a title of honour, for heroic deeds in battle, the unchangeable name of Ellen Gethin.

She was the daughter of a gentleman of the name of Vaughan, who possessed an estate and mansion in Herefordshire, called Herast or Hergest, where with an only brother named David, she was born and brought up, in the reign of King Henry VI. After the death of their parents, David succeeded to his father's estate, and it seems Ellen was living with her brother, who was unmarried, at Hergest, at the time when the fatal affray about to be related took place.

David Vaughan was Ellen's junior, and a fine spirited young man; and there appears to have been much affection between the brother and sister, who lived together in great harmony, opulence, and respectability.

Another branch of the family of the Vaughans (or Vychans as the name was anciently written), of equal standing in respectability, opulence, and consequence, resided at Talgarth, in the county of Brecon. It would appear that there existed a degree of rivalry between the two houses, of so touchy and inflammable a nature, that a breath, at any time, might blow it into a blaze of animosity. The subjects of



dispute between these hot-headed personages, were worthy of the rudeness and insolence of that semi-barbarous feudal age, and characteristic of the Celtic family pride, when brute force supplanted the claims of justice and the decisions of reason. Which was the senior, and consequently the dominant branch of the family—which was possessed of the most extensive lands, forests of timber, and other sources of property—which was the most renowned for martial deeds in ages past, or the most opulent, capable, or respectable at present—or which was the best man at running, fighting, shooting, drinking, &c., became the fruitful source of many an unworthy brawl and violent altercation, settled only by an appeal to arms. The discomfited in one quarrel sought the earliest opportunity of avenging their disgrace by originating another feud; and thus there was no end to their mutual heart-burnings and violent proceedings; and their respective partizans often became compromised in the animosity of their chiefs, and fought, bled, and died in quarrels not their own, till the whole land was tainted with the evil spirit and wrathful propensities of the times.

The heads of the two houses of the Vaughans rarely met, and then only by chance; for each party was too proud either to seek or shun a meeting, when any unforeseen circumstances brought them together. At the time of which we are treating, the elder chiefs of the two families were deceased, and the present representatives were two young men, David Vaughan of Herast, brother of the lady of this memoir, and Shôn Heer,\* or John the tall, so called from his great stature, son of the late Philip Vaughan of Talgarth.

It happened that these two cousins met by chance, at a place in Radnorshire called Llinwent, situate near the village of Llanbister. The probability is, that they entered together one of those houses of entertainment known in their time as a Wine House,† and in a spirit of apparent good-humour and hilarity, perhaps, at first, commenced

\* The orthography of this name in Welsh is *Sion Hir*, but pronounced as we have given it, Shôn Heer.

† For an account of the nature of a "Wine house," the reader is referred to the Memoir of Catherine, wife of Ievan ab Robert, in this work.

drinking and conversation. After bandying about their jests, rough and smooth, for a while, accompanied by those frequent potent draughts, that proverbially "take the reason prisoner," the irritating topics which their fathers loved, all springing from the old family grudge, were touched upon, and produced the usual consequences; claims of superiority and precedence being urged by the one and opposed by the other, till the fury of altercation wrought animosity to its utmost height. At length the enraged cousins rushed out of doors to settle their dispute by an appeal to their swords. Having fought desperately for some time, Shón Heer, being the oldest as well as the most strong and powerful of the two, seemed to gain the advantage, notwithstanding the superior dexterity of his smaller and slighter kinsman; and in the end David Vaughan fell, mortally wounded, and immediately died.

Ellen Gethin appears to have been a woman of keen sensibility, strong passions, and, as it ultimately proved, of dauntless resolution. When the melancholy tidings of her beloved brother's death, by the hand of her cousin, reached her, she gave way for a while to the violent transports of her grief, deeply mingled with hatred for his destroyer; whom she also viewed in the light of the triumphant enemy of her house, of which she was now become the sole representative. The latter consideration, aided by her tender recollections of her beloved brother David, seems to have worked powerfully on her mind, and stimulated her to a determination of vengeance. In one of her paroxisms of resentment, disdaining all the consolation offered by her friends, and we may suppose, the duty of resignation urged by her clerical advisers, she solemnly vowed to accomplish the death of *him* who had been the destroyer of her brother. Besides the impulse of her headlong will, and the suggestions of hatred against the representative of the rival house, who now, as she felt, triumphed over her own—which was become desolate and lonely, save the faint vitality imparted to it by her own existence, she indulged the fatal idea so prevalent in her day, and not extinct in the present, that she had a sacred duty to fulfil, in order to appease the manes of her

brother, and to blot out the insult to her line of kindred by the terrible revenge, the deed of blood which she meditated.

In those days of lawless violence, no notice was taken by the authorities of the times of the fatal affray which we have described; and in a few weeks after its occurrence, Shôn Heer, according to the resolute audacity of his character, ever ready to repel as to give offence, went about his business and his pleasures as if nothing extraordinary had happened, without the slightest expectation of being questioned, much less molested on the occasion. It is not unlikely but that he felt himself exonerated from blame, and that he considered the result of the duel both fortunate for himself and by no means blameworthy on his part, towards his adversary, who fell, as he conceived, in a fair fight. The latter part of his probable reflections might not be ill-founded, as nothing unfair had been imputed to him, or censure passed, except, possibly, casual reflections on his intemperate conduct and quarrelsome disposition, which led to the affray; and the exception which might be taken to the disparity of the comparative strength and size of the combatants.

It was some weeks after this tragic catastrophe that Ellen Vaughan gained the information she required, in answer to the inquiries which she had instituted, respecting the movements of her cousin, whom she had so bitterly devoted to destruction. Having learnt from the spies whom she had set to dog his steps and discover his intentions, that on a certain day Shôn Heer was engaged to "shoot a match," as they called aiming at a target with bows and arrows, with a party of young men in the shooting ground attached to a wine-house, at a place called Llandewi, or David's Church, in the adjoining county of Radnor, and situated a short distance from Llinwent, the scene of the late affray.

On the reception of this intelligence she prepared a suit of male attire for a disguise, and on the appointed day sallied forth towards the place indicated, with sword at her side, cap and feather, according to the fashion of the time, and the usual appendages of a young gentleman of no ordinary pretensions. As in her journey thither she had to



pass Llinwent, where her brother's blood had so lately saturated the earth, the stern resolution with which she had steelled her heart and braced her woman's nerves, we may conceive, received redoubled impulse from the affecting recollection; and she hurried on, unattended it would seem, intensely devoted to revenge, but at the same time generously resolved not to implicate others in the consequences, whatever they might be, of her desperate undertaking.

When she arrived at the place, thenceforth destined to a melancholy celebrity, she found the whole party at the shooting ground, in full enjoyment of their exciting sport, where merriment, spirit, and hilarity, seemed to animate every bosom. Finding that her cousin, her hated and doomed cousin, in several successive matches had been declared the hero of the day, or "master of the field," as the term went, for the most expert and successful feats of archery, with an effort at the semblance of easy effrontery, and a slight display of spirit in imitation of the off-hand manners of the young gallants present, she boldly challenged *the best on the ground* to shoot a match with her. Treating the matter as a personal appeal to himself, Shôn Heer immediately accepted the challenge, and as a point of courtesy towards a stranger, however presumptuous in his bearing, invited her to shoot first, as soon as she was suited with the weapons she had somewhat fastidiously selected. Declining the offer, Shôn Heer seized his bow, fixed his arrow, and with his usual masterly execution, shot it into the very centre of the bull's eye. "There," cried the Vaughan of Talgarth, in the pride of his achievement, "beat *that* if you can!"

"*I'll try*," was the ready reply, muttered hoarsely between her teeth, in a resolute undertone, by the assumption of which she sought to smother the rising agitation which she feared might render her voice tremulous and so betray her sex, disguise, and determined purpose. After fixing the arrow firmly in the centre of the bow, she appeared to be taking a very deliberate aim at the target, towards which every eye was anxiously directed; when suddenly she turned to the right and faced Shôn Heer, with her shaft

directed towards him; instantly drawing her bowstring to its utmost stretch, with heart and hand resolved on deadly doing, away flew the arrow, true to the mark she had fixed on, and pierced her cousin to the heart.

Amidst the consternation and confusion which ensued she made her escape. But Ellen, henceforth to be known only as Ellen Gethin, made no secret of the matter, but triumphed in the vengeance she had so daringly taken, and proclaimed herself the avengeress of her brother's death.

It would appear that the feud between these rival families ended here, as there is no record of any farther vengeance taken by the Vaughans of Talgarth for this dreadful act of assassination. That house seems to have declined from this period, as the house of Hergest revived, and acquired greater celebrity than ever, although the name was changed by the marriage of its female representative. It is curious to observe, as a striking contrast presented in the spirit of those times and the present, that the very deed which in these days would have consigned Ellen Gethin to the gallows, and her memory to abhorrence and execration, in her own age recommended her to the admiration of her contemporaries. It is true she was now become a great heiress, and the sole representative of the house of Hergest; but whether it was from the idea of heroism attached to her name, for so daringly avenging the wrongs of her family, or from more selfish considerations, certain it is that she was sought in marriage by the sons of some of the first families in the adjoining counties. Ultimately she gave her hand to Thomas ab Rosser, the second son of Sir Roger Vaughan,\* knight, of Tretower, in the county of Brecon, a military man illustriously descended; and in him acquired a champion capable of defending her fame and rights.

The grandeur, affluence, hospitality, and high consideration of the house of Hergest, were celebrated in numerous poems yet extant, by a bard of the time, the renowned

\* Sir Roger Vaughan, as elsewhere observed, was the first husband of the Lady Gwladys, who fell, with his father-in-law, Sir David Gam, at the battle of Agincourt; for the particulars of their feats of heroism see the memoirs of that celebrated woman in this work.



Lewis Glyncothi, the warmest tributes of whose ardent muse were showered on its different members. From this happy marriage Ellen Gethin became the mother of a family of three sons; but had to lament the premature death of her second son, Richard Rosser; and at length, of her affectionate husband, when he had attained sixty years of age, who fell at the battle of Danesmore, between the partizans of the houses of York and Lancaster.

It certainly can neither be fair, judicious, nor philosophical, to try Ellen Gethin, a woman of the fifteenth century, at the bar of public opinion, before a jury of that of the nineteenth. Yet she stands charged by a *modern* author with "ferocity" of character; and is further stigmatised by him as "a devilish woman," without making due allowance for the spirit of the age in which she flourished.\*

It has been objected to Nell Gwynn and other "beauties of the court of Charles II.," that they were habitually guilty of such gross vulgarity as swearing, and using phrases of the most unfeminine and indelicate description; but the objection has been well answered, that in their time such conduct was scarcely remarkable, much less severely censurable, as almost every "lady of quality" was guilty of the same offences against morality and good manners. The charges so unwisely made against the lady of this memoir forms a parallel case. Far be it from us to defend, or extenuate the degree of heinousness attached to the murderous deed recorded of Ellen Gethin; but we contend, that as she lived in an age the most terribly conspicuous in our annals for ferocious doings, when a long civil war had brutalised mankind, and the most murderous revenge of a family insult was considered in the light of an heroic virtue, we, a people of nearly four hundred years further advanced in civilisation, have no right to decide on her conduct,

\* In Lewis's *Typographical Dictionary*, article "Glasbury," stands the record to which we refer; it runs thus:—"A singular instance of the ferocity of one of the female descendants of the Vaughan family is preserved in an old manuscript pedigree. Ellen Gethin of Hergest, a *devilish woman*, was cousin-german to John Hir ap Philip Vaughan, who was killed by the said Ellen at David's Church, for that he before had killed her brother at Llanwent, Llanbister, Radnorshire."

according to the standard of public opinion in our own times.

Had the poems of the Welsh bard, Lewis Glyncothi, been earlier known to our English historical writers, as his Celtic muse is ever the handmaid of history in recording the prevalent feelings, as well as the warlike occurrences of his times, his authority must, in a considerable degree, have influenced their writings. In his manifold compositions the instances are numerous where he holds of bloodshedding revenge as most commendable of virtues. In his elegy on the death of Meredith ab Morgan ab Sir David Gam, he commences with wondering that no one had come forward to avenge the premature death of that gallant young man; notwithstanding that he is stated to have fallen in fair warfare, during a skirmish between the abettors of the rival roses. As one wearied of delay, the bard opens his poem with great spirit, demanding the reason of such neglect. "The least punishment," he says, "that could be executed upon his enemies, was to have sacrificed the lives of twelve of them, but not even this had been done."\* Without citing further examples, a reference to Sir John Wynn's History of the Gwydir family, a contemporary of the bard whom we have quoted, and to the English history of the period in question, will bear us out in the assertion, that the conduct of Ellen Gethin, however censurable in a moral and religious point of view, refined also by the more correct habits of thinking and acting in our day, was scarcely extraordinary for the fifteenth century; and that she deserves not to be branded by the pen of history as "a devilish woman."

As a necessary addenda to this memoir, descriptive of the times of Ellen Gethin, we here append a brief account of the circumstances which led to the fatal battle that deprived her of her unfortunate but gallant husband, Thomas ab Rosser, the father of her three sons.

This was the epoch, as before observed, of the great civil commotions of England, between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, called the wars of the roses. These desola-

\* Rev. John Jones, editor and partial translator of the poems of Lewis Glyncothi.

ting contentions appeared to have been brought to a close in the year 1461, when the house of Lancaster lost the sovereignty by the deposition and imprisonment of Henry VI., and Edward IV. commenced his reign. The latter monarch had worn the crown eight years, when a certain party determined on dethroning him, and commenced their operations accordingly. These powerful conspirators were the celebrated earl of Warwick, his two brothers, the archbishop of York, and John Neville, marquis of Montague, with the king's own brother, George, duke of Clarence. The opening of their conspiracy, which was a renewal of the wars of the roses, commenced with an insurrection in Yorkshire, thus narrated in the pages of Rapin:—

“In the beginning of October, 1469, there was a sedition in Yorkshire, which all the historians ascribe to the secret practices of the marquis of Montague and his brother the archbishop of York,\* the occasion or pretence was this. There was in the city of York an hospital, for the maintenance whereof the whole city had always contributed, without, however, being obliged. In time these voluntary contributions were changed into a kind of right, wholly founded upon custom, and for which there were collectors appointed, They who had been bribed to stir up the people artfully spread a report that the contributions were misapplied, and served only to enrich the directors of the hospital. That besides, the hospital being sufficiently endowed, these collections were needless. Whereupon the country people took fire, as if it had been an affair of the utmost importance. They assembled to the number of fifteen thousand, and killing some of the collectors marched towards York, under the command of one Robert Huldern. Upon this news the marquis of Montague, who resided at York, assembling a body of the citizens, sallied out upon the rebels, slew a great number, and taking their leader prisoner, ordered his hand to be struck off. This conduct would give occasion to presume the sedition was not raised by himself, had not his after proceedings been less ambiguous.

“The first rumour of this commotion made the king ap-

\* Hume denies that Warwick himself had any hand in this outbreak.



prehensive of the consequences. Indeed the cause was not very important, but knowing how numerous the Lancastrian party still were, he did not doubt but it was raised by some lord, friend to that house. However, he was very far from mistrusting his brother and the earl of Warwick to be the chief authors. Whatever the issue might be, he dispatched orders to William, earl of Pembroke, governor of Wales,\* to assemble all the forces of those parts, and keep himself ready to march. Meantime, the Yorkshire malcontents, rather animated than discouraged at the ill success of their first attempt, took arms again, and set at their head Henry, son of the Lord Fitzhaugh, and Henry Neville, son of the Lord Latimer. These two young leaders had not much experience, but were directed by Sir John Conyers, a person of great conduct and valour, and well versed in the art of war. Their first project was to make themselves masters of York; but suddenly altering their resolution and route they marched towards London, not at all doubting that their army would be increased by the way, as it really happened. Then it was that the affair of York hospital appeared to have been only a pretence to draw the people together. For the hospital afforded the seditious no manner of pretence to take the route to London.

Meanwhile the earl of Pembroke having drawn together about ten thousand men, principally Welsh, began his march in quest of the malcontents.† He was joined on the road by the Lord Stafford with eight hundred archers. The two armies being come near one another, the earl of Pembroke sent Sir Richard Herbert, his brother, with a detachment of two thousand horse, to view the enemy as near as possible. Sir Richard, who was a very good officer, executed his orders with great conduct, without exposing himself, however, to be attacked. But his men, who had

\* Half brother to Ellen Gethin's husband.

† When he came to Liandilo-vawr, Carmarthenshire, Earl Herbert made his will on the altar in the church, reserving four thousand marks of his own money, in pocket, to defray expenses.—*Jones's Notes to Lewis Glyncoth's Poetical Works.*

not his experience, preposterously imagining he would lose a fair opportunity to defeat the enemies, fell, against his will, upon their rear. But Sir John Conyers who foresaw this indiscretion, was so well prepared that the detachment was routed with great loss.

King Edward hearing this news wrote to the earl of Pembroke not to be discouraged for so inconsiderable a loss, assuring him he would come in person and join him, or send a strong reinforcement. Meanwhile the seditious, finding they had near them an army which might daily increase and fearing to meet the king in the way, resolved to return to Warwick, where, very likely, the leaders knew they should be received. But the earl of Pembroke, *impatient to have his revenge*, marched directly towards them, and forced them to halt upon Danesmoor, near Hedgecote, and within three miles of Banbury, where the two armies encamped at a small distance one from the other.

The earl of Pembroke's *impatience to have his vengeance*, one of his most striking characteristics, led him into another indiscretion, impossible in either case to be committed by a truly great man or a competent general. At a season like this, a night preceding an eventful battle, when great commanders have usually been described as firmly tranquil, while concentrating their entire energies on the momentous business of the morrow; at such a moment the Demon of Discord interrupted the harmony which should have reigned at the head quarters of the king's general and his officers. Indeed it seems as if the evil genius of the Herberts had been doing his work of obstruction from the commencement of this ill-fated expedition, against what at first seemed a mere handful of rioters. According to Hall, it was agreed among the commanders, that whoever first possessed himself of an inn for his quarters, should keep it, and not be liable to be turned out; yet, notwithstanding such settlement of the point, when the royal army entered Banbury, the earl of Pembroke presuming on his superiority of rank as commander-in-chief, most uncourtously, nay, forcibly, took possession of the inn where Lord Stafford had established himself; a house, in fact, that was kept by a mistress of this



nobleman. It was, literally, like turning him out of his own house. But there is no adequate excuse to be offered for the conduct adopted by Lord Stafford in consequence of this usage. Forgetting his public duty, in the bitterness of this private quarrel, he withdrew from the scene of contest, and took with him his eight hundred archers.

"On the morrow, at break of day, the malcontents marched in good order to attack the king's army. They had heard by deserters of the Lord Stafford's retreat, and were resolved to improve it. Henry Neville, son of Lord Latimer, one of their generals, advancing in order to engage, for fear the royalists should retire, was fiercely repulsed, made prisoner, and slain in cold blood. This barbarous action inspiring the northern men with a sort of fury, they rushed upon their enemies, and notwithstanding the valour of Sir Richard Herbert, who performed that day actions extolled by all historians, the king's army was put to the rout."\*

The Welsh poet Lewis of Glyncothi, who was an officer in the army of Edward IV., calls it a most strenuously contested battle, and asserts it was through heedlessness the field was lost. Notwithstanding that the desertion of Lord Stafford contributed greatly to weaken the army of the Yorkists, yet there were other circumstances that aided to cause their overthrow. The following statement, from Baker's History of Northamptonshire, throws a strong light on the subject. "Victory was on the point of declaring for the Welshmen, when a *ruse de guerre* turned the fortune of the day. John Clapham, Esq., one of the retainers of the earl of Warwick was seen mounting up the eastern hill; though only attended by five hundred of the rabble from Northampton and the neighbouring villages, he displayed in front the banner of the earl, with the white bear and ragged staff, and his followers raising a shout of 'a Warwick! a Warwick!' the Welshmen thinking the great earl was actually advancing with his forces, fled in utter dismay, and were slain by their pursuers without mercy, insomuch that five thousand were left dead in the field, including Sir

\* Rapin's History of England.

Roger Vaughan, Henry ab Morgan, Thomas ab Rosser, husband of Ellen Gethin, and Watkin Thomas, son of Sir Roger Vaughan. Among the prisoners were the earl of Pembroke and his brother Sir Richard Herbert, who, with ten other gentlemen, were taken to Banbury, and there beheaded."\*

Lewis Glyncothi's elegy on the death of Thomas ab Rosser, is thus referred to by his translator, the Rev. Tegid Jones. "This poem commemorates the battle of Danesmoor. It opens with stating it to have been one of the most bravely contested engagements that ever took place in Christendom; and in the next moment we are told, how it was lost; and what dreadful havoc the enemy committed there among the Welsh. The bard carries us, as it were, into the scene of the conflict; and we can fancy we hear the war-shout of the different battalions, and the clashing of arms. He describes the lord of Hergest and his division as having fought and suffered desperately, and how he fell at the head of his men, like Arthur who was slain at the battle of Camlan. He next alludes to the valour, the mighty personal strength, and the virtues of the lord of Hergest. After mentioning the death of others who fell in the battle, he records the lamentation of Ellen Gethin, the widow of the deceased; and promises that the death of her lord should be speedily avenged by his three sons."

The din and tumult of the battle, as well as the mob-like clamour of these ill disciplined armies, may be conceived from the following portion of the poem: "There was heard one simultaneous shout, a crying out among the mighty spearmen, some calling Herbert! some Henry! others Warwick! and some "*our* Edward!" (*i.e.* Edward IV.) Mr Jones remarks on the latter part of this passage;—"From the bard's introducing here the pronoun *ni*, our; and also from his employing his pen to lament the fall of the parti-

\* Thus it appears that instead of being beheaded, like his half brothers the two Herberts, as erroneously stated in various accounts, Thomas ab Rosser the husband of Ellen Gethin, fell at the head of his division, while in the act of charging the enemy. For an interesting account of the last moments of the earl of Pembroke and his brother Sir Richard Herbert, see the close of the "*memoirs of Gwenhwyvar*" in this work.

sans of Edward, one would be inclined to infer that he was a Yorkist. But as he is reported to have been a Lancasterian, in the service and pay of Jasper Tudor, (King Henry's Earl of Pembroke,) it is not unlikely but that he might have been hired to write by Ellen Gethin, whence came the M S. called *Lywr Coch*, (Red Book) now in the library of Jesus College Oxford. However it would seem after all, that he was attached in earnest to neither party; for in this poem he does not lament that the Yorkists were defeated at Banbury; but what occasioned his real grief was, the fall of his own countrymen, the Welsh: he was national to excess, and his antipathy to the English was boundless." \*

By the number, and eulogistic style, of the poems addressed by this bard to the different members of the Hergest family, it would appear that Ellen Gethin was a munificent patroness, and rewarded the efforts of his muse so well, as to encourage his perseverance in extolling both the dead and the living. It is evident also, that her affluence and good housekeeping were exactly such as would encourage the frequent visits of the bards and minstrels, who always knew the value of such attractions. The heading of another elegy of this poet's, on the death of Ellen Gethin's husband is thus given by its editor, Mr. Jones.

"The bard was probably within sight of Hergest when he began this elegy; for the opening language of it is that of a person looking from a distance, after a long absence, at a favourite spot, which he was now hastening to re-visit. According to his account of Hergest, there were eight strong buildings, or fortresses, on the estate; and in each of them a refectory and a good stock of wine. The poet presents us with a graphic description of the family monument, which, according to his delineation of it, must have been

\* The editor of Lewis Glynnethl's poems, in his veneration for the character of a Welsh bard, cautiously avoids applying to him, the odious expletive contained in the expressive monosyllable "Spy"; although by his own account, Lewis was no other than a spy, employed and paid by Jasper Tudor, the Lancasterian Earl of Pembroke, and also in the pay and employment of William Herbert, the Yorkist Earl of Pembroke, with the consent and connivance of the former.

exceedingly handsome. And by way of winding up, Watkin, the eldest son of the late lord of Hergest and Ellen Gethin, is complimented as being a warrior, and descended from a noble and ancient race." In an ode to Sir Richard Vychan (or Sir Roger Vaughan), of Tretower, this bard implores him to muster a *posse comitatus* in Wales, and to march against the English of the north, in order to be revenged upon them for having slain his brother, Thomas ab Rosser, of Hergest, and beheaded his half brothers, William earl of Pembroke, and Sir Richard Herbert, of Coldbrook, together with several more of his relatives, at Banbury, after the fatal battle of Danesmoor, in July, 1469." In an elegy on the death of Richard Vaughan, second son of Ellen Gethin and her late husband, he exhorts her to "set her thoughts upon God; and whilst lamenting the death of her son, to call to mind the death of Christ; and what painful agony the Virgin Mary, his mother, must have suffered in witnessing the sight." The lamentation after Richard he describes as being very great and general. He was buried in St. Mary's Church, Kington, where the bard says, "his golden locks are now concealed from view beneath a monument of white marble." He then comforts the mother by telling her what kind offices the blessed virgin had performed, in conducting both her husband and her son into happiness."

The period of the death of Ellen Gethin is not upon record, but it is probable she outlived the poet, Lewis Glyn-cothi, otherwise we might calculate with certainty on an elegy to her memory from the hand of that bard.\*

\* For a portion of these records of Ellen Gethin we have been indebted to the favour of the Rev. William Jenkin Rees, rector of Cascob, who obligingly permitted a perusal of his manuscript history of Radnorshire. It is to be regretted that this valuable county history, containing the laborious researches and embellishments of its venerable editor, has not been sufficiently encouraged to induce him to publish it. But the well known apathy and indifference of the gentry of Wales in forwarding matters of literary enterprise connected with their national records, is unhappily too notorious to require comment. From that cause, four only out of the twelve counties of Wales have been provided with histories; those are Brecon, Cardigan, Pembroke, and Anglesea.



## OWEN GLENDOWER'S FEMALE FAMILY.

As many of our readers may be but little acquainted with Welsh history, and the particulars of the life of Owen Glendower, it will be necessary here to give a brief outline of that hero's career.

His proper appellation, according to the usage of his country, would be Owen ab Griffith; being the son of Griffith Vychan, and successor as lord of Glyndwr, but in the annals of fame he is always known, in Welsh, as Owain Glyndwr, and in English, immortalized by the muse of Shakespeare, as Owen Glendower, or Owen of Glendower. He makes Henry IV. say, when one of his officers boasted of having fought personally with that hero:—

"I'll not believe it; you might as well have met  
The devil, as Owen of Glendower  
Alone upon the mountains."

Pennant states that one manuscript fixes his birth on the 28th of May, 1354; Lewis Owen places it five years earlier, "for in the year 1349" says he, was distinguished by the first appearance of the pestilence in Wales, and by the birth of Owain Glyndwr. Holinshed relates that his father's horses were found the night of his birth standing in the stables up to their bellies in blood: ominous, no doubt, of his son's cruelty, and indicative of the slaughter he should commit.

The superstitions and popular notion that signs and symbols marked by the commotion of the elements, prognosticating their future career, ever attended the birth of extraordinary men, has in this instance been well expressed by Shakespeare; wherein he makes Glendower say.—

— "At my birth  
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes;  
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds  
Were strangely clamorous in the frighted fields;  
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary,  
And all the courses of my life do shew,  
I am not in the roll of common men."



It appears Griffith Vychan gave his son an excellent English education; and as if shrinking from a retrospect of national events, and sensibly aware of the woe-impending nature of a warrior's course, determined that his pursuits should be pacific, and his profession that of a civilian. Whatever may be said of the anti-patriotism of the princes and chieftains of Powys (for it must be admitted they were generally disloyal to their native and natural sovereigns), they doubtless became the earliest pioneers in clearing away the obstacles to an ultimate annexation of their country to England, by their voluntary adherence to that crown. Thus it appears, curiously enough, that the father of Owen Glendower intended his son should become an English statesman and courtier. To forward these views, he was placed to study English law in the inns of court, and Owen became a Barrister. His father's influence was then exerted to get him an appointment at the court of King Richard II. and he became the scutiger, or esquire of that monarch. As the latter was a military post, and not in consonance with his former pursuits, it is probable that Owen at that time renounced the intention of following any further the functions of a lawyer and civilian. Having attended the king in his Irish wars, and acquired a taste for military achievements, he doubtless proved himself worthy of that martial post, as he received the honour of knighthood at the hand of his sovereign. Thus Griffith Vychan's original views were entirely frustrated, and an opening formed for all the after evils that stimulated his son in his insurrectionary career.

It was at this period of Owen's life that a lawsuit took place between him and Lord Reginald Grey, of Ruthin, about a piece of land, centrally situated between their respective estates, the lordships of Ruthin and Glyndwrwy.\* The event of this sharp legal contest was, that the law awarded to Owen the subject of the dispute. The revolution that afterwards took place, which ended in the deposal and murder of Richard II., and the elevation of the duke of Lancaster as King Henry IV., deprived Owen Glendower of his place at court, when he retired to the

\* It was a common called Croesau, or the Crosses.

country to spend the rest of his days at his noble residence of Glyndwrwy.

There he was not permitted to remain long undisturbed. His old adversary the potent lord of Ruthin, taking the advantages of his competitor's loss of influence at court, seized on the land which the law had awarded to Owen in the late suit between them. Owen complained of lord Grey to parliament for this usurpation of his right, but his suit was dismissed unredressed. "Lord Grey injured him also in his honour, and represented him as disobedient to the reigning sovereign. Previous to an expedition against the Scots, Henry summoned his barons to attend with their vassals, among whom Owen was included. Unfortunately for the peace of the realm, the king's writ for the purpose was handed to lord Grey, which the demon of discord would not suffer him to deliver sufficiently early to Owen, so as to enable him to appear among the other barons. Wilful disobedience was ascribed to him, aggravated we may suppose, by his antagonist by every insinuation he could instil. His non-appearance was construed into disaffection for the cause; and by this piece of treachery, under pretence of forfeiture, Grey took possession of such parts of Glendower's estates as lay adjacent to his own.

When the subject of Glendower's complaint was so slightly entertained by the peers, John Trevor, bishop of St. Asaph advised the lords to be circumspect, lest by slighting Owen's complaint, they should irritate and provoke the Welsh into insurrection. Had this advice been attended to, and the salutary maxim of "*Principus Obsta*" been adopted, fifteen years war might have been averted, and all the horrors attendant on it. Instead of redressing the complainant's wrongs, and paying a little deference to an injured Welshman's feelings, some of the lords replied, "that they did not fear those rascally barefooted people."

When Owen saw that parliament, so far from doing justice to his remonstrance against Grey's vindictive and rapacious conduct, that they added insult to injustice, the die was cast, and the period had arrived to vindicate his own and his country's wrongs.

No sooner had Owen displayed his standard of revolt than the country was up in arms; thousands flocked to it from all parts of the principality, encouraged by the prophecies of ancient times, promulgated by Merlin, and by Aquila, who foretold that the sovereignty of Britain, after having been in the possession of the Saxons and the Normans, should ultimately return to the Ancient Britons. Besides the inflammatory strains of the bards and minstrels, who encouraged the people to follow his fortunes, the Franciscan friars, as partizans of the late Richard II., invited Owen to invade England.

As it is not within our limits to relate the particulars of Owen Glendower's various battles with the English, during his warfare of fifteen years, we shall briefly state the results of some of his campaigns.

Hostilities commenced in the summer of 1400, by Glendower's attack on the domains of Lord Reginald Grey; but when he had entirely recovered his own lands, the object of his enterprise was attained; and it does not seem that he meditated further hostilities. Doubtless he would at this time have sheathed his sword, dismissed his forces, and retired to his home, but for the ill-directed severity and impolicy of the king of England.

Aware that Owen was a staunch partizan of the late king, Henry chose to regard the attack on the domains of Reginald Grey as against himself, and sent that nobleman, supported by Lord Talbot, and as he deemed with sufficient forces to crush the Lord of Glyndwrwy. By no means anticipating such measures they came upon him unawares, and Owen very narrowly escaped, and sheltered himself and partizans in the woods. The sagacious mind of Owen immediately suggested powerful measures of self-defence; he saw that once in the hands of the English authorities, not only his entire possessions, but his life would be forfeited. Therefore this attempt to capture or destroy him and his followers, literally forced him to take up arms again, and his temporary insurrection for redressing private wrongs, entirely changed its character, and assumed the ominous features of a national rebellion.

Decision of character, that master-spring of human greatness, discovered itself early in Owen's career. Encouraged by the enthusiasm and devotedness of his countrymen, who had long groaned under the exactions and tyranny of the English, he caused himself to be proclaimed prince of Wales, and was solemnly invested with the diadem of sovereignty, as the legitimate successor of Llewelyn, the last native prince of that country. He also made common cause with the English nobility who were disaffected towards the reigning king whom they aimed to dethrone, and raise to the crown the young earl of March, the legitimate successor of Richard II., who was then the prisoner, or rather protegee of Owen Glendower.

As before observed, our present object is not to celebrate the exploits of Owen Glendower, or to enter minutely into the events of his career, but merely to sketch, for the information of strangers to Welsh History, some particulars of his position in the stirring incidents of his age; with the view of giving some slight notices of the Celtic dames and damsels who composed the female family of that singular and celebrated chieftain,\* pursuant to the title and purpose of this work. Thus much, however, may be appropriately stated:—in the course of his fifteen years' warfare, Time saw the capable and warlike Henry IV. assisted by his son, the gallant "Harry of Monmouth," no less than thrice personally in the field against him, supported by all the available forces of England; and each time, as Shakespeare expresses it, sent "bootless back." Time saw Owen aided by and in alliance with the king of France, and acknowledged by his ambassador as the legitimate sovereign of Wales. Time saw the Percies of Northumberland and the Douglas of Scotland seeking his arms and counsel against the usurper Bolingbroke; and Time saw them crushed at the battle of Shrewsbury, and their arch-enemy Harry victorious, and thus by their ruin firmly fixed on the English throne. And lastly, Time saw Owen himself a deserted and ruined man,

\* Those who wish to read his entire history, are referred to his *Life in the Cambrian* Plutarch, by John Humphreys Parry, and the "*Memoirs of Owain Glyndwr*," by the Rev. Thomas Thomas, vicar of Aberporth.

a disguised wanderer in the land, concealed in caverns, and the secret recesses of the mansions of his friends.

It has been ascertained, however, that a free pardon to Owen and his followers, *in case they should request it*, was issued by the English crown on the accession of Henry V. Thomas states that "our hero terminated his hopes and fears on the 20th of September, 1415, on the eve of St. Matthew, in the sixty-first year of his age, at the house of one of his daughters; but whether of his daughter Scudamore or his daughter Monnington is uncertain."

Owen Glendower's pretensions to Cambrian royalty were derived from his mother; her name was Ellen, or Elena; she was the eldest daughter of Thomas ab Llewelyn ab Owen, by his wife Eleanor Goch. The latter was the eldest daughter of Catherine,\* wife of Philip ab Ivor, lord of Iscoed, and eldest daughter of Prince Llewelyn ab Griffith, the last native prince of Wales.

The wife of Owen Glendower was Margaret, daughter of Sir David Hanmer, of Hanmer, in the county of Flint, one of the justices of the king's bench, by the appointment of Richard II, in 1383, and knighted by him in 1387. Her nuptials were previous to her father's promotion; for it is certain that some of the daughters were married, and the sons grown to manhood before Glendower appeared in arms in 1400.

Iolo Goch, (Edward the Red) the domestic bard of Owen Glendower, paid the following tribute of praise on this lady, her offspring, and her general hospitality.

"His lady wife, of generous aims,  
The kindest, best, of wedded dames!  
Right oft has cheered this heart of mine  
With sweet metheglin, sparkling wine,  
Oh woman, eminent for worth,  
From family of knightly birth,  
Beneficent, and nobly feeling!  
The warmest of good hearts revealing.

\* Pennant observes that Catherine was probably married before the death of her father, otherwise Edward's jealousy about the succession to the principality would have made her share the fate of her sister Gwenllïan, who perforce took the veil in the convent of Shaftesbury. Warrington on the other hand says that Catherine was married to Malcom, earl of Fife. The two accounts are not reconcilable unless we give Gwenllïan to the earl of Fife.



Her children source of joys and cares,  
Sweet rosy loves ! come forth in pairs,  
A nest of chieftains, fair to see,  
Destin'd for future chivalry !" \*

Alas for the flattering predictions of the friendly bard ! the utmost that we can learn of the fates of the chieftains of this "nest," is comprised in a single line ; "it is probable that they fell in battle." Browne Willis, however, asserts that on their father's death they fled into Ireland ; that one of them settled in Dublin, and took the name of Baulf, or the strong, and was ancestor to a respectable family in that city.

This admirable wife who blessed the peaceful portion of her husband's days with the mild virtues of a tender partner, a faithful friend, and a fondly cherishing mother, bore him amongst the above-mentioned "nest of chieftains," a little bevy of fair daughters also ; whom we afterwards find united by marriage to some of the most noble of English families. Several were wooed and wedded into the most eminent of the houses of their own Cambria. We read in certain English pedigrees, that Alicia, one of the most beautiful of Glendower's daughters, was married to Scudamore of Holm Lacy, in the county of Hereford ; and Janet his third, and most accomplished daughter, (for her wit and wisdom were the wonder of all who knew her,) became the wife of Crofts, of Croft castle, in the same county. Jane the fourth daughter married Lord Reginald Grey, of Ruthin castle, in

\* The lines in the text, form rather a paraphrase than a translation ; the original of Iolo Goch ran thus :—

A gwraig aren o'r gwragedd !  
Gwyn fy myd o'i gwin a'l medd ;  
Merch eglur, llin marchawglyw,  
Urddol, hael, o reiol ryw,  
A'l blant a ddeuant bob yn ddau,  
Nythod teg o bennaethau !

The following is Pennant's literal translation :—

His wife the best of wives !  
Happy am I in her wine and metheglin :  
Eminent woman of knightly family,  
Honourable, beneficent, noble.  
Her children come in pairs,  
A beautiful nest of chieftains.

the county of Denbigh,\* North Wales; and Margaret, the fifth, bestowed herself, "from violent love," on the brave and handsome Monnington of Monnington, also in the land of Hereford.† By these marriages, towards the end of the fifteenth century, we see that the Saxon and the ancient Briton could unite in one interest, and that by the most intimate and hallowed of all ties, the rites of marriage. Even the three illegitimate daughters of Owen were married into houses of considerable note. One was wedded into the house of Gwernan; another, named Mevanwy, to Llewelyn ab Adda of Trevor; and Gwenllïan, of whom we have a separate notice in this work, to Griffith ab Rhys, of St. Harmon, in Radnorshire.

Thomas, in his notice of Glendower's residence, thus describes its situation and extent. "The tract, ever memorable for its hero, called Glyndwrwy, or the Valley of the Dee, (which name it still retains) extends about seven miles in length, and lies in the parish of Llangollen, Llandysilio Llansaintfrïd, and Corwen. It was anciently a Comot, in the kingdom of Mathravel, or Powys. This dale is narrow, fertile, bounded by lofty hills, and in various parts profusely covered with trees."

Iolo Goch, has handed down by the songs of his harp, a very particular description of the habitation and its hospitalities. He describes it as a kind of palace-castle, with a gate tower, and surrounded by a moat. It contained nine halls of entertainment, and each furnished with a wardrobe filled with clothes for his retainers, and garments for the passing traveller, who might need such change. Near to the main building, but beyond the moat, and on the side of a green hill, appeared a goodly dwelling, divided into various apartments for the accommodation of wayfaring strangers, to lodge them in. There were also, in and about the castle, a church and several small chapels. The place was in the midst of every convenience for family provision,

\* It appears that Lord Reginald Grey wooed and won "the gentle Jane," while he was a prisoner to her father.

† We are indebted for a portion of this notice of Glendower's wife and daughters to an article in an Annual called the Boudoir,

and support of the most generous hospitality; a park for deer, a warren for rabbits, fields for cattle, a pigeon-house near at hand, a mill, orchard, and vineyard, and a well stocked fish-pond. A heronry and a falconry for sport. Then the wine and the ale, and the mead, flowed like water on each welcoming board. In short the bard describes with the grateful fidelity of one who had often partaken of the feast, that the life of the cook was estimated, by the laws of hospitality, at the worth of a hundred and twenty other men! And such was the hospitality of the house, the place of a porter was deemed useless; and (oh rare boast!) such was the honesty of the Welshmen of those days, that locks and bolts were unknown.

## POMPONIA GRÆCINA,

WIFE OF AULUS PLAUTIUS, THE FIRST ROMAN GOVERNOR IN  
BRITAIN.

FROM Hughes's *Horæ Britannicæ*, and the high authority which he quotes, we glean the following account of this lady, whose history is coeval with the earliest Roman domination in Britain. "Among the Romans of distinction that came to Britain, it is reasonable to suppose that a few converts to Christianity might be found: one we know there assuredly was, that illustrious person, Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Aulus Plautius, the first governor of Britain. Of that lady Tacitus gives us the following account:—"Pomponia Græcina, an illustrious lady married to Plautius; who was honoured with an ovation, or lesser triumph for his victories gained in Britain, was charged with having embraced a strange and foreign superstition; for which alleged crime her trial was committed to her husband. He, agreeable to the laws and ancient forms of proceeding in such cases, convened her family and friends together; and, being in their presence tried for her life and fame, she was pronounced innocent." The historian adds, "the lady lived long after this, but in perpetual sadness."

Hughes remarks, "that Pomponia was in heart a Christian, there can be little doubt, for that was the foreign religion of which the Romans were become so jealous; and the worship of the Gods of Heathenism was supposed essential to the prosperity of the empire. To embrace a religion which was in hostility to that of Rome, was therefore considered highly criminal, and especially in a person of quality. But this was not always strictly attended to, as we find there were Christians even in Cæsar's household, after St. Paul came to Rome, as appears from his epistle to the Philippians, ch. iv., v. 22.\*

\* Another writer on this subject observes, "we may reasonably conclude that its spirit had already touched *Cæsar's household*, although it was only in the veiled meekness of a gentle domestic influence."

Pomponia may not have publicly professed Christianity, and was cleared of the charge brought against her, while she was prohibited from adhering to what Tacitus, according to the usual mode of expression, styles a strange and foreign superstition. In consequence of her being thus situated, she lived in great privacy; renouncing the pomp of high life, and cherishing in her own breast the sentiments which she dared not divulge. This account of Pomponia appears also to be a confirmation of what we have supposed, that there were other persons partial to Christianity among the Romans who were at this time in Britain; or this lady could not have been so strongly suspected, since her coming to Britain, of evincing a partiality to the Christian cause. The trial of Plautius's lady occurred, according to Dr. Stillingfleet, when Nero and Calphurnias Piso were consuls, or A.D. 57, which being, according to him, after St. Paul's coming to Rome, he considers her to have been one of the apostle's converts.\*

\* Pomponia Græcina, with Claudia, otherwise Gwladys Ruffina, and St. Tecla, the virgin and martyr, are supposed to have been contemporaries, and form a trio of our earliest Roman-British female Christians. The following are our two attempts at working their names and celebrity into *Tribans*, or Welsh Epigrams:—

TRIBAN THE FIRST.

The Roman-British Christians three  
In name and order thus they be;  
Pomponia Græcina—mild and gracious!  
The spouse beloved of Aulus Plautius;  
Gladdis Ruffina—Pudens' wife,  
Most lovely in her faith and life;  
Lastly, the gentle martyr, fair  
St. Tecla—famed for merits rare.

TRIBAN THE SECOND.

Pomponia Græcina,  
And Gladdis Ruffina  
With Tecla, the virgin, the martyr, and saint,  
Were three wondrous fair ones,  
For piety rare ones,  
Their race Roman-British, of legends most quaint.



## GWAWR,

SIXTH DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOW, WIFE OF ELYDR  
LLYDANWYN, AND MOTHER OF THE RENOWNED BARD  
LLYWARCH-HEN.

GWAWR, was the sixth daughter of Brychan Brecheiniog. Her name may sound uncouthly to an English ear, and look any thing but agreeable to an English eye, composed as it is of five letters, out of which four of them are consonants and only one vowel. But translated, Gwawr bears the beautiful and poetic meaning of *the Dawn, or Aurora*, as personified in classic lore, the rosy-fingered. She became the wife of Elydr Llydanwyn, the younger brother of Kynvarch-oer, and it appears curious that so many of the sons of this chieftain became the admirers and husbands of as many of the daughters of Brychan. Fortunate, as several of the females of this family were, in the eminence of character attained by their progeny, the lady of our present notice yields to none of her sisters in that respect, as she became the mother of that patriot prince, heroic warrior, and illustrious bard, Llywarch-hên, (Llywarch the venerable,) one of the trio, formed between himself, Aneurin, and Taliesin Penbeirdd.

"This prince had a considerable territory in the north of England; he not only cultivated an acquaintance with the Muses, but shone in arms, and was one of those who signalized themselves in an age remarkable in the history of Britain, for terrible wars and devastations. Llywarch-hên, however, took no part in the civil war which brought on the catastrophe at Camlan so fatal to the Britons, wherein Arthur fell in the year 542. Foreseeing the impending storm, he entered into a confederacy with his relation Urien Rheged, and his valiant son Owen, to repel the incursions of the Saxons, who menaced the very existence of the British government in the North: these persevering invaders having already possessed themselves of all that

country to the East, called Deivr a Brynich, or Deira, and Bernicia."<sup>\*</sup>

Llywarch-hên lost twenty-four of his sons in these long-continued battles; and lived to the age of one hundred and fifty it is said, when the epithet "*hên*" became attached to his name. He died upon the banks of the Dee,† near Bala, in Merionethshire, where is still a secluded spot, called Pabell Llywarch-hên, or Llywarch, the venerable's old tent or cot. Dr. Davies says, that in his time there was an inscription to his memory to be seen on the wall of the church, wherein it was said the venerable bard was interred; but the *beautifications*, (I use a Gothic term to describe a Gothic act,) of succeeding churchwardens, have long obliterated all traces of it.‡

A literal prose translation of his poems was published, some years ago, by the late Dr. Owen Pughe, under the title *the Heroic Elegies of Llywarch-hên*, accompanied with a brief sketch of his life. Theophilus Jones remarks;—"his poems are plaintive and elegiac, several of them, particularly that in which he laments the death of his sons have great merit, the English translation, however, of the latter, by Mr. Elliot, published in Jones's reliques of the Welsh bards, in my opinion, *far surpasses the original, in poetic beauty*."

|| "See the warlike train advance,  
Skill'd to poise the pond'rous lance;  
Golden chains their breasts adorn;  
Sure for conquest were they born.

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\* The latter was erected into a kingdom by Ida, (called *Flamddwyn* in Taliesin's poem of the battle of Argoed,) in the year 547, as the Saxon chronicle and all our historians affirm. Upon the death of Ida, in 560, Ella the son of Imi assumed the title of king of Deira. Richard of Hexam, a Northumbrian writer in 1180, says, that Deira extended from the Humber to the Tees; and Bernicia, from the Tees to the Tweed. They were both afterwards united by Ethelred, who formed from them the kingdom of Northumberland,—"*Carte's History of England*."

† Written Du, but pronounced Dee, in Welsh.

‡ Theophilus Jones.

|| Forgetting his criticism on a passage of Taliesin, *paraphrased* like this, by an English author, Mr. Jones has greatly over-rated these lines, six of which

Four and twice ten sons were mine,  
Used in battle's front to shine :  
But low in dust my sons are laid,  
Not one remains his sire to aid.  
Hold ! oh hold, my brain thy seat !  
How doth my bosom's monarch beat;  
Cease thy throbs, perturbed heart,  
Whither would thy stretched strings start ?  
From frenzy dire and wild affright,  
Keep my senses through the night."

are given at the close, while the following single line expresses the whole of the original, far more forcibly.

"Oh God ! that my senses be left me this night."

The two first lines of the above, and the last but one, are plagiarisms from Gray, and how doth "*my bosom's monarch beat*," from Shakspeare.

## GWENHWYVAR,\*

WIFE OF THOMAS AB ROBIN, LORD OF COCHWILLAN, AND

### THE OLD WOMAN OF ANGLESEA.

A SOLITARY pathetic incident in the life of each of the two females under present consideration, is all that we have to offer respecting them. As their misfortunes were of the most calamitous description, the interest attached to them will amply make up for the brevity of the details; connected as they are with the national history of that eventful period, when the desolating civil wars of York and Lancaster made the entire land of England alternately a reeking field of slaughter, and a Golgotha among the nations.

During those commotions between the descendants of Richard II. and those of Henry IV. and their partizans, although the larger number of the Welsh attached themselves to the house of York, there were many of the best families in Wales who espoused the cause of the Lancastrian party. Among the latter was Thomas ab Robin, lord of Cochwillan, a gentleman of considerable rank and estate, the husband of the lady of this memoir; whose ill fortune it was to be taken prisoner and brought to Conway, by a party of the Yorkists, under the command of William Herbert, the new earl of Pembroke, during the ascendancy of the house of York, whose king, Edward IV., was now upon the throne.

In these terrific times of anarchy and bloodshedding, originating in the dispute of two cousins as to which of them had a right to be king, the whole nation became partizans with one or the other of them; and not unfrequently

\* As much pertness has been displayed by certain *willings* in their (so called) Tours in Wales, on the supposed unpronounceable Welsh names that came in their way, we beg leave to suggest that any English tongue may utter this name with ease and propriety, recollecting that the Welsh *w* is sounded like the English *oo* in *hood*. The entire pronunciation is *Gwen-hoocy-var*, without accenting either of the syllables.

the members of the same family espoused different sides in the party politics of the day—brother against brother, parents against their children, and children against their parents, till the nation became demoralized, nay brutalized to the most astounding extremity. Each of the belligerents became infuriated with the madness of party rage to such a fearful degree, that their resentment against each other was as violent as it was implacable. Their mutual hostility was also as blind as it was fierce and destructively overwhelming, for the brief hour in which their power was in the ascendant. Thus we see him, who one day in all the insolence of demi-sovereignty, adjudged his captives to a violent and immediate death, crushed in his turn, and subjected to as stern a fate as he so lately doomed others. But notwithstanding the frequency of such retributions, they seemed to teach no lesson to the implacable spirit of the age, whose motto appeared to be, *to destroy or be destroyed*, captivity and death being literally synonymous terms, for rarely was a prisoner of either party spared the final introduction to the axe of the executioner.

Impressed with these gloomy convictions, it may be conceived with what intense terror Gwenhwyvar learnt that the captors of her husband and the masters of his fate were the two Herberts, William, earl of Pembroke, who received that title on the deprivation of Jasper, the second son of Owen Tudor, for his zealous adherence to the fortunes of Edward IV., and his brother Sir Richard Herbert, of Coldbrook; the two most stern and unrelenting of all the commanders for the house of York. These brothers, as stated in their mother's memoirs in this work, were the sons of Sir William ab Thomas, of Raglan Castle, and the Lady Gwladys, daughter of the renowned Sir David Gam, of Brecon, who fell on the field of Agincourt. We are informed that they dropped their Welsh designation and adopted the surname of Herbert, according to the English fashion, at the request of Edward IV., whose especial favourites they were, and well might be, for their undeviating adherence to his cause in every extremity, although their illustrious maternal grandfather gained his laurels and lost



his life in defence of a sovereign of the house of Lancaster. The Welsh heralds and etymologists derive the name of Herbert from *Hirbert* (*Hir* signifying tall, and *bert* handsome); which is said to be personally descriptive of these grandsons of Sir David Gam. However plausible such a derivation might be, the English antiquaries very justly deny a Welsh origin to the name of Herbert, and say the founder of it was Henry Fitzherbert, who espoused Lucy Corbet, one of that profligate monarch's, (Henry I.) twelve mistresses! But the pedigree formed by the Welsh genealogists at the command of Edward IV. (which is still preserved in the herald's office), originate the family from Herbert Fitzroy, a natural son of Henry I. "This difference of opinion," observes Cox, in his Monmouthshire tour, "may be reconciled, as the above mentioned *Lucy Corbet was concubine to the king, as well as wife to the lord chamberlain.*" Truly, these Normanized Welshmen must have been deeply infatuated with the king they served, to have accepted, *as an especial mark of grace*, such a questionable honour, in exchange for their own unblemished paternal designation; although the illegitimate offspring of the king or chamberlain by the concubine in question, was said to be Edward the Fourth's own ancestor. "But," say *all ignoble nobles*, and the *echoes* of courtly parasites, in defiance of truth and honesty, "the king can do no wrong—the king is the source of honour—infamy becomes honour and vice virtue, when sanctioned by the practices of royalty."\*

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, a descendant of the Herberts

\* The question respecting this name, were the matter in any way important is easily set at rest; and without doubt, precisely as stated in the text, originating from Henry the First's *accommodating* lord chamberlain, so *honourably* allied to the king's still retained concubine, Lucy Corbet; and by no means, as it is impudently pretended by some parties, from a count of the name of Herbert, or Fitzherbert, said to have come to this country in the train of William the Conqueror, and to have afterwards become chamberlain to his brutal son William Rufus. The Norman name of Herbert and the Welsh name of Hibbert, have been confounded together. The latter it is, and not Herbert, that is derived from *Hir* (tall) and *bert* (handsome). There are several families in Glamorganshire of this name; the change of a single letter would restore it to its original propriety of *Hirbert*.

under present consideration, has given these ancestors of his a magnificent report, in his life of Henry VIII., and notwithstanding his obvious personal interest in magnifying the prowess and exalting the fame of those relatives from whom he derived whatever he had to boast of lineal glories, succeeding historians have taken his word, and merely echoed or reproduced his overdrawn pictures as veritable likenesses. A peep into the pages of that honest old historian, Sir John Wynne of Gwydir, would have exhibited them more faithfully portrayed, as furious demons rushing through their fatherland, and with fire and sword blighting the verdure of humanity;\* a disgraceful contrast to Ievan ab Robert, the Welsh chieftain in the Lancastrian interest, whose moderation towards the Yorkists in his power, and filial consideration for the Cambrian soil he trod, forbade his staining it with the blood of man. Lord Herbert dwells especially upon the "Chivalry" of the Herberts, a term which was intended to convey something infinitely superior to mere personal courage; but chivalry with them appeared as an indefinite fiction of the Feudal ages, and proved as hollow and heartless as the the hypocrisy of those who dress themselves in an external garb of piety, when such vesture "becomes the fashion at court." It is true on the part of Sir Richard Herbert, the younger brother, we have two instances that aid to show a slight glimmering of humanity lurking at the bottom of a heart, darkened and made callous by the usages of war, in his pleading with his brother to grant the prayer of the old woman of Anglesea, and his manly reply to his dishonourable and brutal king, who refused to ratify his terms with the Welsh captain, on the capitulation of Harlech Castle. But of the elder brother, William, earl of Pembroke, we have nothing on record to

\* Sir John Wynne of Gwydir records numerous instances of the brutal inhumanity of the Herberts in their desolating course through North Wales. Among other relations of their unsparing vindictiveness, he mentions that "Earl Herbert's desolation consumed the whole borough of Llanrwst, and all the vale of Conway to cold cinders, whereof the print is yet extant; the very stones of the ruins of many habitations carrying yet the colour of fire." We may add, meet monuments to the memory of such scourges of the human race, embellished forsooth! as they were said to be, by the graces of the age of chivalry.

distinguish him from the most common-minded man of the sword.

They possessed the common virtue of courage in an eminent degree ; the ruffian qualities of muscular strength and fearlessness of danger, a mere matter of nerves and muscles set in motion by the animal propensity of an indomitable self-will ; but no generosity of sentiment, no heroism properly so-called, could be attributed to them ; none of the great self-denying qualities that roused the admiration of friends and foes to deify the valiant of the Greek and Roman era. They were even deficient of common humanity, much less those brighter attributes, which may be called the civilization of warfare, in contradistinction to the unscrupulous barbarity of slaughtering savages : the Herberts, in fact, were fitted only to shine their hour and be extinguished, in a war of extermination, like that in which they were engaged.\*

Attired in the deepest mourning and absorbed in excessive grief, the lady Gwenhwyvar presented herself before the earl of Pembroke, and in the agony of despair entreated that her husband's life might be spared, feelingly urging that although a nominal adherent of the house of Lancaster, he was undistinguished for any particular acts of hostility against his opponents of the house of York ; and surely on no estimate of demerits could his faults be found to deserve the extreme punishment of death. Her pathetic pleading, as might be expected, was unavailing : and although she implored in the most touching accents of a broken heart, her solicitation was harshly repulsed, and absolutely denied ; at the same time, an intimation was given that his execution should take place immediately.

With astonishing firmness of character, equalled only by the tenderest spirit of conjugal affection, which distinguished her entire life, Gwenhwyvar witnessed the dire deed that widowed her ; which took place in the neighbourhood of Conway Castle. An appalling ceremony followed, little cal-

\* Had Sir Richard Herbert not been so entirely influenced by his relentless brother, the earl of Pembroke, he would have been an exception to these observations, but as he followed in the same path of cruel devastation, reluctantly or not, he cannot be exempted from the well-founded censures of posterity.

culated upon by the authors of this wanton and uncalled for tragedy. When Gwenhwyvar received the severed head of her beloved husband in her apron, she fixed her piercing gaze on the face of Earl Herbert; impenetrable as he was thought, her words and manner appeared to thrill him to the heart's core; after pointing in emphatic silence to the ghastly object, still quivering with recent life, a wild spirit of prophesy seemed suddenly to inspire her with superhuman energy. In the impassioned language of her great agony and despair, she vehemently vowed that it should not fall unavenged:—that for the one foe destroyed in him, scores of enemies to the house of York should start into being to punish his murderers: and that the pitiless heart which denied her prayer, should soon be as cold as that within the mutilated trunk of her unhappy husband, and his severed head should lie as low.

There is another case recorded of the unrelenting barbarity of the Earl of Pembroke, attended with a mother's malediction as this was by the evil prophesy of a bereaved wife. After having inflicted the utmost evil in their power on the inhabitants of the other countries of North Wales who had favoured the Lancasterians, the two brothers passed over to the Island of Anglesea, where the unhappy people became subject to similar severities. Seven brothers, who were reported to have been zealous partizans of Lancaster, and active opponents of the Yorkists, at length fell into the dreaded power of the Earl of Pembroke, who immediately sentenced them to be hanged. The mother of these unhappy victims of the chances of civil war, came before the Earl, and in the extreme agony of matronly despair implored him to pardon two, out of her seven doomed sons, on the plea that they were the youngest, mere boys, and consequently incapable of having caused much evil to any party. Her prayer was sternly denied; when the miserable mother vehemently pleaded for the life of the youngest, who was a mere child;—but although his gallant and more generous brother Sir Richard Herbert, seconded her petition, the Earl still continued inexorable, stigmatizing them all as a nest of thieves and murderers, although in fact their

only crimes were being of Lancasterian principles; he declared them all equally guilty, and ordered them for execution.

It was then, that the ancient woman was seen to fall upon her knees, and with a pair of wooden beads on her arms, with her face piteously raised to heaven, as if appealing to the benevolence of the eternal power against the inhumanity of man, she commenced the Roman Catholic ceremony of formally cursing him; praying that "God's mischief" might overwhelm him at the first battle in which he might be engaged.

The haughty earl of Pembroke, however, paid as little regard to her curses as to her previous prayers; especially as the triumphant pæans of his party had deafened his ears to the touching accents of maternal agony, and converted the wailings of the foe into the music that he loved. The star of York was in the ascendant; and the insolence of success had hardened the hearts of all, against the prostrate enemies of their cause, while the dazzling splendours of their fortune's luminary absolutely blinded them to the possibility of a future downfall, or a distant day of retribution. The failure of the Lancasterians, the deposition and imprisonment of Henry VI., with the murder of his son, were national events coincident with the triumph of the rival house, when Edward IV. was formally enthroned, and his warrior-partizans became the partakers of his good fortune.

The latter part of our memoir of Ellen Gethin has indicated the manner in which the peace was broken, and the flames of war rekindled between the factions of York and Lancaster, after Edward IV. had reigned eight years, and the country, for that period had been comparatively tranquillized. As some circumstances connected with the fate of the two Herberts are therein purposely omitted, we shall supply them here.

Although so great a space of time had intervened, since the old woman of Anglesea uttered her malediction, doubtless there were many, in that superstitious age, who believed that her terrible words were not cast upon the scattering winds, but had reached the ear of Omnipotence, and that the day of retribution would yet become a verity.



Perhaps the haughty Herbert was not altogether free from secret misgivings, on a point too strikingly urged not to be impressed upon his memory, as the day of his *first battle* after "the curse" was approaching. That his brother Sir Richard Herbert was powerfully affected by the scene, is evident, both from his becoming an intercessor in favour of the unhappy mother, and his behaviour in the hour preceding the fatal conflict.

"The Earl of Pembroke having arranged his men in order of battle on the plain of Danesmoor, found his brother Sir Richard Herbert, leaning on his pole-axe, in a sad and pensive manner; whereupon the earl said, "what, doth thy great body apprehend any thing, that thou art so melancholy, or art thou weary with marching, that thou dost lean upon thy pole-axe?" "Sir Richard replied" that he was neither, whereof he should see the proof presently, only I cannot but apprehend on your part lest *the curse of the woman with the wooden beads* fall upon you." It has been stated in the memoir of Ellen Gethin, in what manner the battle of Danesmoor was lost by the Yorkists, that with a more competent general, could not fail of being won; and how the two Herberts became prisoners to the Lancasterians, by whom they were doomed to death, with as little mercy as in their own hour of triumph they had accorded to others. The following anecdotes of them, and their behaviour at their final hour exhibit them to advantage. Of William Earl of Pembroke it may be said that "nothing in his life became him like his leaving of it;" we are told that "he met his fate with the most noble fortitude and resignation, and gave a memorable instance of contempt of death and fraternal affection. As he was laying his head on the block, he said to Sir John Conyer who ordered the execution, "let me die, for I am old;\* but save my brother, who is young, lusty, and hardy, mete and apt to serve the greatest prince in Christendom."

Had Sir Richard Herbert been the senior instead of the junior brother, doubtless his career would have been

\* This could only be meant in a comparative sense, the Earl's half brother by their mother's first marriage, Thomas ab Rosser, who fell in this battle being then sixty, was probably about five years this nobleman's senior.

far more brilliant, and distinguished in many instances with magnanimous generosity, a trait of native character which he appears to have checked, in deference to his elder and ennobled brother; a man of great ferocity and gloomy pride, and far his inferior in every merciful feeling and ennobling virtue. The following anecdote of his bearing before Edward IV., tells proudly in his favour, as a man of the strictest honour and knightly integrity.

One of the great achievements of the Herberts was the capture of Harlech castle from the Lancasterians. That fortress was held for Henry VI., by a Welsh chieftain named Davydd ab Ieuan ab Eineon, a strong partizan of the house of Lancaster. He was besieged here by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, after a march through the heart of our Cambrian Alps, attended with incredible difficulties and dangers. In some places the soldiers were obliged to climb, in others to creep and precipitate themselves down the rocks;\* and at length they invested the place, till that time deemed impregnable. Pembroke committed the care of the siege to his brother Sir Richard Herbert who happened, singularly enough, to be in size and prowess on a par with the Welsh commandant. In course of the siege Sir Richard sent him repeatedly a summons to surrender, but Davydd stoutly answered, and always in the same words, "that he had once kept a castle in France so long, that his defence of it became a subject of conversation among all the old women of Wales; and that he was determined to keep this, till all the old women in France should hear and talk of it." But famine, it is supposed, at length subdued him, and he yielded up the castle on honourable terms, Sir Richard Herbert having pawned his honour for the security of his life. Edward at first disavowed those terms, when Sir Richard told him plainly, his highness might take his life instead of that of the Welsh captain, for that he would assuredly replace Davydd in the castle, and the king might send whom he pleased to take him out again. This prevailed; but Sir Richard received no reward for his services.

Sir Richard Herbert was a man of uncommon stature and

\* This route still bears the name of *Lle Herbert* signifying Herbert's place, or route.

pro prowess; and in the days when heavy armour was worn, and personal strength an object of high consideration, greatly signalized himself in feats of arms. In the battle of Danesmoor he displayed such striking instances of courage and force, as are scarcely to be equalled in the annals of chivalry. With his pole-axe he made a lane, and passed and returned twice through the enemy's army, killing with his own hand one hundred and forty men; which, according to his relative and biographer, from whom we quote, "is more than is famed of Amadis de Gaul, or the knight of the sun."

"Much lamentation, and no less entreaty were made to save his life, both for his goodly personage, and for the noble chivalry which he had displayed in the field of battle." But all intercession proved ineffectual; the sentence was carried into execution, and Sir Richard Herbert suffered death with spirit and resignation. Lord Herbert of Cherbury thus closes his notice of this valiant knight:—"Thus fell Sir Richard Herbert, the intrepid soldier, and the flower of chivalry!"

The Earl of Pembroke was buried at Tintern Abbey; and Sir Richard Herbert in St. John's church, Abergavenny, where a costly monument of very elaborate sculpture was raised to his memory, near the magnificent tomb of his mother the Lady Gwladys. They are now complete wrecks, the figures and ornaments of them broken and defaced, from the indurability of the alabaster of which they were composed: the mass of ruins seem to mock the vanity of the erection, and pointedly to ridicule all human attempts at perpetuating mortal glory.\*

\* The following description of this monument is transcribed from—"Cox's History of Monmouthshire."

"Beneath an alabaster monument containing two recumbent figures under an arch between the chapel and the choir are deposited the remains of Sir Richard Herbert of Coldbrook and Margaret his wife; the tomb is ornamented on the sides with a variety of figures in relievo, but so defaced as to be with difficulty made out. The figures are recumbent with uplifted hands; Sir Richard Herbert is represented in a full suit of mail, with his head bare, and supported by a sheaf of arrows, which was his crest. His feet rest on a lion. His lady is habited in a long robe, her head reposes on a cushion, supported by two figures, much broken—in all probability angels; and her feet rest upon two dogs." We may add to this, that as the duck wings that generally distinguish sepulchral angels, are absent without leave, it requires a discerning eye to discover which are the dogs and which the angels.



## GWENLLIAN,

SIXTEENTH DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG, WIFE OF  
LLYR MERINI, AND MOTHER OF CARADOC VRAICH-VRAS.

GWENLLIAN, the seventeenth daughter of Brychan, was married to Llyr Marini, who in different accounts is described both as "lord of Gloucester," and "a chieftain of the North of England." He was the son of Meirchion Cul-Galed and brother to Kynvarch-oer, the husband of Drywin, Gwenllian's fifth sister. Like many of her sisters, the glory of Gwenllian was in becoming the mother of a most illustrious son, Caradoc Vraich-yras, or Caradoc of the Brawny Arm.

This celebrated chieftain was contemporary with King Arthur, Urien Rheged, and other worthies of that stirring and romantic age, including the bards, Taliesin, Aneurin, and Llywarch-hen. He is said to have conquered a portion of the Western, or mountainous part of Breconshire, either from some of his uncles, or their children. Latterly however, the whole of the principality of Brecheiniog devolved upon him, as its sovereign. Theophilus Jones says, "many arguments might be adduced to prove that Caradoc Vraich-yras was brought into Breconshire by the general consent, if not by the invitation of the inhabitants, at that time suffering under the oppression of an usurper, whose defeat, about the latter end of the sixth century, conferred upon his competitor the government of that part of the country over which he ruled."

In right of his wife's father, it seems, he became "lord of Gloucester," and claimed the sovereignty of the province of Brecheiniog by his maternal descent from Brychan, as well as by conquest or election. Caradoc Vraich-yras is also named as one of the most celebrated of King Arthur's knights of the Round Table, and the lord keeper of *y Castell Dolorus*, or the Dolorus Tower; which was no other than a dungeon, where prisoners of war or traitors of the state were confined.\* Dispensing with the wonderful stories

\* This officer, in after times, was denominated Constable of the Keep.

told of him by the Romance writers, we are informed by Carte, upon the authority of a Triad (No. 64 in the Myvyrian Archæology), that Caradoc Vraich-vras was king or prince of the Cornish Britons, in the latter end of the reign of King Arthur. On examining the Triad in question, this is very clearly disproved by the Breconshire historian, who also by another Triad established the fact, that this knight or chieftain, as a courtier of King Arthur's by his office of president of the council, was bound to attend his sovereign, in his ambulatory courts, one of which was in Cornwall; whence the mistake in supposing him to have been a sovereign prince of that country, while in reality both he and his descendants were settled in Breconshire. Caradoc Vraich-vras has been celebrated in the bardic strains of Taliesin and Aneurin, and most especially in several of these curious historical documents of the ancient Britons—the Triads. In one of them he is recorded as one of the grand supporters or defenders of the principality of Wales. “The three beloved chiefs of Arthur's court, who never could bear a superior in their families; of whom Arthur sung the following stanza :—

“ My three good knights for battle's shock,  
Mael and Lludd, in armour clad,  
And that same brave intrepid lad,  
The prop of Wales, Caradoc.”\*

It is to be remarked, that Caradoc Vraich-vras, in common with Arthur and his other knights, shine both in history and romance. To separate the latter from the former has been our aim; but when we have to mention his wife, history seems to sink, as romance rises. Her name was Tegau Euvron; by some translated Fair one, silver breasted; perhaps the latter part refers to the ornaments she wore. Theophilus Jones confesses he can make nothing of it; his words are :—“a name, the definition of which, I am at a loss to account for. If all the pedigrees were not against me, I

\* The original runs thus :— “ Tri anwyl Llys Arthur, a thri chadvarchawg ni Ynnasant Pentulu arnynt erloed, ac y cânt Arthur englyn iddynt, nid amgeu, Sev :”—

“ Yw vy nrhi Carvarehawe,  
Mael a Llydd Llygyrawe,  
A cholovn Cymru Cra dawo.”



should have conceived it ought to be written Têg ei Vron, or Fairbosom." She is said to be the daughter of King Pelynor (perhaps Pwll mawr), and was celebrated by the bards as one of the three eminently chaste women of Britain, who possessed three valuable ornaments, of which she alone was reputed worthy; her knife, her golden goblet, and her mantle. The last was certainly with great propriety esteemed one of the thirteen curiosities of the Isle of Britain. It would not fit, nor could it be worn by any but a chaste woman. Theophilus Jones adds:—"Percy, in his reliques of ancient poetry, has a long ballad or tale in rhyme upon this subject, *which* has little to recommend it besides its antiquity."

\* As a matter of taste, we must heartily protest against this opinion. It is true, the *unsucceded* ancient ballad referred to, is slightly faulty on the score of imbecillacy, which has been entirely removed in the modernized edition of it, in the *Cambrian Wreath*. It is full of the most ludicrous incidents; and the Boy and the Mantle has always been considered, besides its entertaining qualities one of the most singular vestiges of antique British balladry. The reader can form his own opinion of it by referring to page 74 in this work.

## GWENLLIAN,

HEIRESS OF THE VALE OF CLEWYD, DAUGHTER OF RHYS AB MARCHANT, AND WIFE OF GWERNWY AB MARIEN AB MORGENEN AB CYNAN AB GWAITHVOED, A CELEBRATED CHIEFTAIN OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

ALTHOUGH most of the original Welsh names of women, such as Sina, Angharad, Gwladys, and Mevanwy, have grown out of usage with our modern race, except in such rare instances as where a revival of Welsh nationality has encouraged a taste for their restoration among the "literary few" in our land, still the name of Gwenllian retains all its ancient popularity and general adoption; and strange enough has never been discontinued at any period of our history. In the present day it is a standing favourite with the rural population both of North and South Wales; in the former, the petite familiar of Gwenllian is Gwenno, and in the latter Gwenny—and few are the districts in which a dozen or two of Gwenny-vachs are not to be found. English writers on Wales have frequently endeavoured to identify this name with Winnifred, and Winny, with either of which, however, it has nothing to do; and we can only pity the stupid bad taste of those who would sacrifice all national appellations at the shrine of their own prejudices, in their works of fact or fiction.

It is difficult, however, to account for the popularity of the name of Gwenllian throughout Wales, as no definite ideas are now entertained of the meaning which it conveys. In these days, when the grass-bleached fabrications of the Irish loom are among the most common articles in vogue, its origin may appear almost ludicrously simple; as it is derived from *Gwen*, the feminine of white, and *Llian*, linen cloth; which combined forms the designation of white-linen. In a note to his brief notice of the lady of this memoir, in the Royal Tribes of Wales, Yorke remarks as an apology for the apparent homeliness of the name, "linen was so rare in the reign of Charles the Seventh, of France, who lived

had six sons, and these six great grandsons of Gwernwy and Gwenllian jointly gave the land on which the beautiful church of Gresford is built. "This is a fact well known," says Lewis Dwnn, the antiquary, "the sepulchres of the grandchildren of the said Ithel are in the church of Gresford."

Yorke, in his "Royal Tribes of Wales," concludes a note on Gwenllian with the following inquiry; "should not the gentlemen of this tribe, (that of Dyffryn Clwyd and Allington,) carry their ancestress's arms, Azure, a fess, Or, between three nags heads, erased Argent; at least quartered with their own, since she was so considerable an heiress." This question can be answered only by the learned in Welsh heraldry. Williams in his "Cambrian Biography of eminent Welshmen," states "that her son Eunydd bore for his arms, Azure a lion rampant salient Or, wherewith he quartered his mother's coat, being azure between three Nag's heads erased argent, a less Or."

## GWENLLIAN,

DAUGHTER OF GRIFFITH AB KUNNAN\* AND ANGHARAD, KING  
AND QUEEN OF NORTH WALES, AND WIFE OF GRIFFITH  
AB REES AB TUDOR, PRINCE OF SOUTH WALES.

GWENLLIAN was the youngest of the four sons and five daughters of the above-named sovereigns. She was born at the royal palace of Abervraw, in the island of Anglesea, about the year 1097. It has been shewn in the life of her mother, that her infancy, childhood, and youth, were passed amidst the most perilous and tumultuous times ever known in her country, when English aggression overwhelmed her native land with such startling disasters as threatened the utter annihilation of its future independence as a nation. As there are no incidents on record respecting her early life, except that, like the rest of her family, her youth was spent amidst the terrors of sudden invasion, or in scenes of actual contention, we shall pass on to what has been generally deemed the most momentous of events in the existence of a female, the period when she first attracted the gaze of man's admiration.

In the year 1114, when Gwenllian was a blooming beauty of seventeen, an illustrious visitor, often the subject of their family conversation, and long expected, appeared at the royal palace of Abervraw. This was the young prince Griffith, son of her father's ancient friend Rees Tudor, whose arms at the decisive battle of Carno proved mainly instrumental in recovering for him, the throne of his ancestors which he then enjoyed.

As we have had to treat of so many contemporaneous characters in the respective lives of Angharad, queen of Griffith ab Kunnau; of Nest, daughter of Rees ab Tudor;

\* According to Welsh orthography this name is written Gryffudd ab Cynan, and Rees ab Tudor, is written Rhys ab Tewdwr; from which we deviate to avoid the mispronunciation of the English reader.

"The gallant Gwellian who battled till death,"

of Nest, daughter of Iestyn ab Gwrgant; and now of Gwenllian, the subject of our present memoir; in each of which we have had occasion, incidentally to narrate some particulars in the life of this prince (Griffith ab Rees,) therefore some repetitions will be found to occur, which however are essential, to make this narrative effectively perspicuous.

In this memoir, especially, it becomes necessary to remind the reader of some of the earliest incidents of his life. When his father, the venerable Rees ab Tudor, at ninety years of age was overthrown in Glamorgan by the united forces of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, and the Norman baron Fitzhamon, and at the instigation of the former beheaded; two of the sons of Rees were still in the field, at the head of their late father's army, that was soon after entirely routed. These were Gorono, the eldest, and Kunnan.\* The former was soon taken, and like his illustrious father, beheaded. The unfortunate Kunnan was then literally hunted to death; being very closely pursued in his retreat towards the vale of Towey, to save his life he plunged into a lake called Cremlyn, and aimed to swim over it, but was drowned in the attempt.† Thus, there were but two surviving, of the four sons of the late sovereign of South Wales; these were Gwenllian, daughter of prince Griffith ab Griffith, soon to be in the closest ties of relationship with the lady of this memoir, and his youngest brother Howel. Both Griffith and Howel were at this time in their infancy; and being the next claimants in the succession to the crown of South Wales, were in eminent peril of their lives both from the insatiable ambition and relentless cruelty of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, and the equally ferocious emissaries of the King of England. In what manner the life of Howel was preserved, how, where, or by whom he was concealed and nurtured has never been made clear by any of our historians, although it stands recorded that he was at length in his boyhood

\* In Welsh written Cynan, but pronounced Kunnan.

† From this circumstance the lake had its name changed, and was ever after called Llyn Cynan, or Kunnan's lake.



captured and imprisoned by the English.\* To secure the life of Griffith, whose heirship to the throne of South Wales had placed him in especial danger, he was sent, for safety and education to Ireland, where all the claims of a fugitive prince and "heir of dominion" were most hospitably extended to him, by Murcart the reigning King of Dublin. There he remained till this period, when he was twenty-five years of age; and now returned with all the gifts and graces of a young warrior, panting for an opportunity to distinguish himself in arms, for the recovery of his long lost sovereignty and dominions.

Prince Griffith ab Rees was received with great cordiality by the royal family of North Wales. Griffith ab Kunnan could not but recollect, with feelings of intense gratitude his obligations to his late father, when he was precisely in the same predicament as his son, his present guest, a wandering refugee, throneless, and even homeless; and yet, such was his unfortunate position, he dared not openly to appear as his friend, dreading the consequent hostility of that cunning, capable, but unscrupulous, and most rapacious sovereign, Henry I, King of England; who had already, to the keen eye of the observing politician, divulged his plans for the annexation of South Wales to his own dominions. However, for some time, Griffith ab Rees was entertained as happily as he could have wished, among the family of the northern prince, of whose scruples to befriend and assist him, he was not yet aware. It was soon discovered, that of all the females of the royal family, his especial attentions were devoted to Gwenllian; who, flattered by his preference, we may conceive by after results, was by no means backward in meeting his respectful advances: for coquetry at this period, had not been studied as an art, supposed to enhance the merits of female attraction.

It may be conceived with what an all absorbing interest

\* Parry in his life of Rhys ab Tewdwr, has omitted altogether the name of Howel. In the like manner he makes no reference whatever to the after fate of the female members of that scattered and ruined royal family, except respecting Nest, the daughter of that Prince, who became the wife of Gerald de Windsor, after being the mistress of Henry I.

this younger daughter of a royal family beheld this young prince, whose grievous wrongs, romantic adventures, and unmerited sufferings had been so frequently the subject of her parents' conversation, before his arrival ;—but now she saw and conversed with the long pitied being with whom her secret soul so deeply sympathised :—beheld in him the future liberator of his country from English usurpation, whose arrival his depressed subjects so long looked for—and more than all perhaps, when she learnt from him the acknowledged power of her own fascination, her entire soul appeared to have become devoted to him.

Happy were the days thus spent by Griffith ab Rees at the court of North Wales. The princes Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader, he found to be as manly in athletic sports and exercises as courteous and refined in manners. The venerable Queen Angharad treated him like a son, and all her daughters like a brother, although one or two perhaps might look a little askance at the preference which he manifested for the youthful Gweullian. Griffith ab Kunnan the aged king, "like a grey Lion," as one of our poets has happily described him, became somewhat distant though civil ; and latterly grew cold and even petulant, when the subject of the enterprise of the prince of South Wales became the theme of family conversation. The natural shrewdness of Griffith ab Rees enabled him soon to detect this peculiar bearing of the old prince, from which he dreaded the worst results. But with the manly frankness so peculiar to him, he determined soon to learn from his own lips, how far he might depend upon his friendship and assistance.

At length the prince of South Wales found an opportunity for the private conference with his royal host which he had for some time sought ; and explained to him the nature of his hopes and expectations. He conjured him, by the friendship which he bore his father, to assist him with military forces, whereby he might commence his campaign for the recovery of his dominions ; assuring him that besides the assistance in men and arms which he had been promised by the generous king of Dublin, that South Wales,

throughout all its hills and vales, would declare for him and be up in arms, as intimated to him by many of its most powerful chieftains as soon as he appeared there at the head of an army.

This was exactly the point which the northern prince was predetermined to evade, as long as possible, and like all equivocators, ultimately to deny altogether the assistance sought, for the politic reasons before referred to. The plain straightforwardness of the young prince, unpractised in the arts of political negotiation, served him better on this occasion, than the deepest experience in machiavelian wiles and state chicanery. The artless honesty of his appeal took the old prince by surprise; and the sophistry which he had prepared for his defence against the reasoning of a deeper diplomatist, was utterly nullified, and fell to the ground unused. His only refuge from yielding a direct reply was to assure him of the insurmountable difficulties presented by the watchful vigilancy of the English court, and the numerous forces of the Barons, who exercised a vice-regal authority in the marches, and were unassailably potent in their numerous castles throughout the Cambrian territory. In conclusion he advised him to defer, if he would not be persuaded to yield up his views altogether; and here their conference terminated.

Bitterly chagrined at his disappointment the young Prince now felt the necessity of a graceful acquiescence with his destiny—of “yielding to the force of circumstances,” as Napoleon designated such a condition; and of “waiting the births of time,” as Cromwell philosophically has described such a state of inaction in a revolutionary warrior's life. Accordingly he now resolved to remain quiet for the present, among the royal family of North Wales, and spend those hours in reflection and observation, which he would more gladly have devoted to action, had circumstances favoured his aspirations. By this turn in his affairs, however thwarted ambition might feel it, he became a gainer in real felicity, as he thus continued in daily intercourse with the gentle Gwenllian, the lady of our memoir.

Early misfortunes, frequent and heavy vicissitudes, a

whole life worn, wasted, and chafed in warfare, had long checked the native daring and intrepidity of soul, which had distinguished the early career of the once heroic Griffith ab Kunnan. His energies exhausted, and now desirous only of repose, the homely and selfish virtue of prudence had entirely supplanted his former dauntless characteristics. Like several other Welsh sovereigns, his predecessors as well as his successors, this prince commenced his daring life like a bounding Lion, the terror of all opponents; and ended it like a jaded war steed, aged and war-worn, whose brightest laurels seemed trodden into litter; his only desire a tranquil shelter, where he could spend his latest hours in peace, and then lie down and die, free from all disquietude whether of domestic altercation or foreign broil.

Griffith ab Kunnan's statement respecting the vigilance of the English court, in observing all movements within the Cambrian territory, was quite correct, although uttered in the spirit of evasive confusion—an accidental truth of lamentable accuracy; for a very brief space of time had elapsed before Henry was informed of the landing of Griffith ab Rees, his reception at the court of North Wales, and the evasion, amounting to a refusal of Griffith ab Kunnan to assist him with an army to support his pretensions. Henry now had recourse to a scheme of some profundity to frustrate the future attempts of the prince of South Wales. He sent a letter composed in the most flattering terms to Griffith ab Kunnan, highly calculated to sooth and inflate his natural pride, wherein he addressed him as his friend and brother sovereign, concluding with a cordial invitation to pay him a visit. Having hitherto received nothing from Henry but the severe inflictions of his invading armies, and the repeated threats of annihilating the native population of Wales, and re-peopling it with Englishmen, his present condescension and offer of friendship on equal terms without any assumption of superiority, quite overcame the old prince, and undermined his habitual cautiousness of character. Contrary to the wishes of his counsellors, his queen, and family, he accepted the invitation; and, as an honourable escort of a

splendid description was already prepared, consisting of the English nobles, who were the bearers of the king's letter, with the addition of a slight retinue of his own, the prince of North Wales, and the whole cavalcade set off for the English capital.

Previous to the departure of the prince of North Wales for the English court, Howel the younger brother of Griffith ab Rees made his escape from the custody of Arnulph, lord of the castle of Montgomery, and went to his brother Rees at the court of Griffith ab Kunnan. There are but few records of the life of this unhappy youth—one more of the living relics of Rees ab Tudor's ruined and far-scattered family:—it would appear that in early life he was by some means torn from his relatives and natural protectors, and brought up among the English lords of castles in Wales, literally a child-prisoner of state, for whose security those who held him in custody were answerable to the king of England. Probably he was destined by that unscrupulous monarch, like his elder brother, for that destruction which was only postponed till he could be detected in seeking the restoration of some portion of the lost honors of his house and family. The touching scene of their meeting—the long estranged brothers, who by the most calamitous of destinies had been separated from infancy, must have been interesting in the highest degree to the gallant sons and amiable daughters of the aged sovereign of North Wales; and doubtless neither the last nor least of partakers in the general sympathy was the benevolent old Queen Angharad. To the young Gwenllian, it must have been a very gratifying circumstance, that the long lost brother of her admirer was at length restored to him, and thus one source of deep anxiety removed. Griffith pleasingly felt he was no longer a lonely branch on the stricken tree of Cambrian royalty. He now had found in his long sundered brother, a friend and partizan in the future enterprizes which he contemplated.

At the time of Griffith ab Kunnan's departure for the English court two years had expired since Griffith ab Rees had first become his guest. That time had neither been spent in idleness, nor altogether in promoting his love-suit



with the lady of this memoir. It appears that during this interval he had visited his sister Nest and her husband Gerald de Windsor at Pembroke castle; and doubtless mixed much with the chieftains of the South, to sound their inclinations towards his future proceedings for the recovery of their long lost national independence. In these excursions it is probable he went forth in disguise; as he was given to understand agents and spies from England hired to assassinate him were neither few nor faint in their purpose to earn King Henry's reward.

Previous to his departure from Ireland he was led to expect, from the representations of certain chiefs who had visited him in his retreat, and vehemently urged his speedy return to his native country, that thousands of his natural subjects would flock to his standard as soon as it became unfurled, and that his army would meet reinforcements wherever he appeared, as he advanced into the country and announced himself the son of the late Rees ab Tudor, and their present sovereign by right of inheritance. Of this romantic view of the subject he found nothing verified: consequently he listened with suspicion to all whom he found too prone to gloss over the existing impediments, and to represent his intended course as a smooth plain of flowers. He wisely resolved to subdue his chagrin, and disabuse his mind by rejecting all such highly coloured representations, and rely only on those probabilities founded on his own actual experience, and that of a few sage and trusty partizans in whom he felt warranted in confiding. He now found that during his long minority and exile, a strange and unnatural degeneracy had taken possession of the minds of his countrymen, many of whom took part with the invaders of their country against the few generous patriots who staked, and in many instances lost their all in defending it. The general depravity had produced national anarchy and hostility to order among the Welsh, which enabled those who coveted their possessions to make an easy prey of them, by fomenting intestine quarrels. In these civil conflicts, when each party had exhausted his means of hostility, in stepped the wily Norman, who had either been invited, or had

arrogated to himself the office of umpire, and with his overwhelming forces trod down the claims of both, and seized for himself the subject of contention. Thus it has ever been, and ever will be, in all countries where a third party is invited or allowed to interfere between two conflicting disputants in a nation.

Well might the royal family of North Wales feel alarmed at the probable consequences of the aged king, now almost in his dotage, being brought in contact with a prince so corrupt and unprincipled as the then reigning king of England. The boasted learning which gained him the surname of Beauclerc, or the Scholar, was of a description that tended more to vitiate the heart, and make it revel in the abominations of its all-absorbing selfishness, than to enlighten and civilize his species.\* In our memoir of the Lady Nest, we have attempted to delineate the character of this royal libertine and patron of assassins; therefore it becomes unnecessary here to repeat what is to be found a few pages off. His fascinating manners, daring immorality, and dangerous political aims, made him a perilous companion for the old Northern sovereign. Griffith ab Kunnan on the contrary, was an aged prince of simple tastes and plain manners; and although at an earlier period of his life rather given to some of Henry's favourite foibles in what has been called "his inordinate love of women;" in later days he became more morally correct in conduct, and severely serious in his demeanor. Henry was not slow in discovering that one of the surviving passions of his royal guest whom he aimed to dupe, was for Bacchanalian enjoyments; and accordingly ministered copiously to that fatal weakness, through which he made the necessary breaches for assailing the citadel of his highest virtues. The credulity of the Welsh sovereign, founded upon his own sincerity, made him blind to the arts of Henry, and slow to credit the duplicity attributed to him by his own attendant councillors; so that from the evils of this eventful and fatal visit he lost his previous character for the most ennobling virtues that could adorn a royal personage.

A faint sketch of the reception and entertainment of

Griffith ab Kunnan, at the court of Henry I., and the consequences that followed have been rendered by the old chroniclers, in their usual meagre style; and the few details handed down to us are thus stated by Dr. Malin, one of the most judicious of our Welsh tourists; assisted as he was by the antiquarian researches of Edward Williams.

"When the king heard this" (the meeting between the two brothers, Griffith and Howell, the sons of Rees ab Tudor), "he sent messengers in the most flattering manner to Griffith ab Kunnan, inviting him to his court in London, with a princely guard for his safe conduct. Having entertained him nobly for some time, and bestowed on him very numerous and rich presents of gold, silver, and jewels, the king disclosed his mind to his royal guest, and represented what danger it would be to him and his principality of North Wales, to protect or assist Griffith ab Rees. He promised to Griffith ab Kunnan his dominions and estates, to be held freely, and his rights or prerogatives according to his own will and wishes, with whatever support he might on any occasion want, if he would only send Griffith ab Rees a prisoner to him, or else put him to death privately, and transmit his head, as an incontestible evidence of the deed. Cruel and disgraceful as such an act must have appeared, Griffith ab Kunnan bound himself to the king by an oath to perform it. But he related this in a fit of intoxication at the king's court, and was overheard by one of Gerald's relations, who sent a messenger on full speed with the information. Gerald acquainted his wife Nest, sister to Griffith ab Rees with the whole affair; and she, with all possible haste sent messengers to her brothers in North Wales, to inform them of the plot against their lives. As soon as they heard of it they put themselves into the sanctuary of the church.

"When Griffith ab Kunnan returned to North Wales, he inquired for his own guests, and on being informed where they were, sent an armed force to fetch them away. This, the Ecclesiastics would not suffer, alleging it to be inconsistent with their holy office to consent that the sanctuary of

God and his saints should be violated. While this was in debate between the clergy and the officers of the northern king, a ship from Pembrokeshire arrived off the coast. The sailors compassionating the condition of the two princes, took them into their ship and conveyed them in safety to South Wales."

It has been stated by some historians that Gerald de Windsor assisted his brother-in-law Griffith ab Rees in his ambitious projects of recovering the sovereignty of South Wales. The preceeding extract would seem to favour that supposition, the fact, however, is very doubtful. Gerald, from his position as the English king's lieutenant and representative in South Wales, could not have supported the pretensions of Griffith without being in actual rebellion against his sovereign. But that he should secretly have connived at his assumptions, at the instigation of his wife, is very probable; considering with what a boundless degree of affection he loved "the beautiful Nest," as manifested in his reception of her, after the many years of involuntary absence, occasioned by her abduction by the villanous Owen ab Cadwgan, as related in that lady's memoirs.

The fortunate escape of the young princes Griffith and Howel, and deliverance from the most imminent life-peril, created sensations in different quarters as intense and various as the interests that were either served or thwarted by the eventful occurrence. The fury and disappointment of Henry, the impotent wrath of the "old grey lion," now become a very tiger in his rage for blood, may be well imagined. Contrasted with these evil passions it is pleasant to conceive how rapturous and full of pious thankfulness was the joy of Gwenllian, her venerable mother, and generous brothers and sisters, and not the least, that of the Lady Nest. To the princes themselves this was, indeed, a most memorable epoch in their lives, and appeared even an especial interference of Providence manifested in their preservation. Never were the wily machinations of a subtle, far-reaching despot more signally foiled, than in this failure of Henry's murderous scheme. The many and mighty waters of his wrath which were to quench the kindling fires



of the Welsh war of independence, proved as fountains of oil that set the whole in a blaze—strengthened and multiplied his foes, in the same degree that his partizans were weakened and diminished.

Griffith ab Rees knew all this, and elated with his new prospects and freedom from all shackles, felt that the star of his destiny had risen from its shrouding clouds, and now was soaring in the ascendant. Disdaining half measures, of which there was no further necessity, abjuring the inactivity in which he had hitherto only thought and planned his future proceedings, he determined on vigorous and immediate action. Yielding at once to the impulsive fire of his genius, he unfurled the national banners, resolutely took the field, appealed to the manhood and patriotism of the country, which was eagerly responded to, and soon found himself at the head of such numerous forces as promised speedily to become a powerful army. It appeared as if Fortune, suddenly enamoured of his prowess and the holiness of his cause, had determined to make up for former persecution by now showering on him a full abundance of her long withheld favour. Notwithstanding the bustle and peril of these momentous times, it would appear it was at this period that Gwenllian, the lady of our memoir, determined to unite her prosperous fortunes with those of the young liberator. History gives no details of this union. That it was in one respect clandestine, without the sanction of her father, is certain; but doubtless secretly favoured by every other member of her family. Her romantic escape to South Wales is conceivable only to have been in consequence of a secret understanding between her and Griffith, her future lord; the method of it was probably similar to that which brought Griffith and Howel in safety to the South; but what members of her family attended and accompanied her on shipboard, or afterwards witnessed the marriage, has never been recorded. Her safe arrival, cordial reception, espousal to Griffith, and her future sojourn with him, cheerfully partaking of, and solacing the most perilous period of his adventurous career—is all that history has permitted us to learn of that portion of her life.



We may clearly trace in this alliance both the wise and generous policy which dictated the measure, and the peculiar sort of opposition rendered by his family to the preposterous notions and aims of Griffith ab Kunnan. Notwithstanding the fatuity and determined wrong-headedness of the old king, and his ruinous tendency to second the atrocious views of the English court, it is both curious and pleasant to witness the bearing of his family towards him, while the weakness and wickedness of this part of his life so loudly called for a curb to his mischievous proceedings. To princes so shrewd and patriotic as Owen Gwyneth, the heir-apparent, and his brother Cadwalader, the faults of their father's government must have been very manifest; yet the filial respect so long habitual to them, for his great age, and their deference for the feelings of their mother, the good old queen Angharad, who could remind them of what her lord had been in other days—forbade them to oppose his will openly. At the same time they saw it was indispensable for the interests of the country that a speedy end should be put to the present order of things, by which the nation was writhing under a virulent malady that threatened to devour the very vitals of society. The scheme which they at length organized did infinite credit to their sagacity, and statesmanship; hinging altogether on the marriage which we have stated to have taken place between Griffith ab Rees and the lady of this memoir. They contrived that this occurrence should appear to their aged parent and sovereign in the light of a clandestine union in which none were concerned except the youthful parties themselves: and that being past remedy, to be forgiven and forgotten, as a fault, as soon as might be. By this contrivance, and the peculiar aspect thus given of the affair, the hostility of Griffith ab Kunnan, towards the Prince of South Wales became nullified; as, to pursue his own son-in-law with a murderous intent, was entirely out of the order of crimes known in those days of kindred love, and would have stigmatized with infamy either subject or sovereign who could be guilty of it. Thus while these prudent princes gently deprived their father of the power of mischief in that

quarter without wounding his pride as a sovereign, the rest of his promised services to the King of England, by the same stroke of policy were also rendered entirely ineffective.

Never were a youthful pair, of high destinies united under circumstances less favourable to immediate happiness, or the possession of domestic comforts, than what attended Griffith and Gwenllian. A rustic bower in the wild forest of Ystrad Towey,\* afforded the best accommodations that the future sovereign of South Wales had to offer, for their nuptial couch. But the generous Gwenllian anticipated all such discomforts, and like her excellent mother, under similar disastrous fortunes disdained to wait till the sunshine of prosperity casts its glories on the pompous halls and chambers of a citadel of safety within the walls of a garrisoned castle. The romantic ballad couplet

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,  
O'er hill and dale with thee I'll go,"

describes the sentiment, and would have been an appropriate motto for the adoption of this dauntless single-minded princess; determined as she was in the high spirit of adventurous enterprise, to brave the worst that could happen beside her chosen lord. The heart-devoted true womanhood of the primitive times was here developed in noble contrast to the calculating selfishness and squeamish caution of our modern Fine-lady-ism; and in all the bearings of this youthful royal lady, we trace nothing but eminent generosity as the source of all her actions. Doubtless the stern realities of their precarious lodgment, on their first entrance into the forest of Ystrad Towey, was any thing but favourable to the continuance of mere romantic sentiment; but the worst discomforts that could beset them were utterly unable to generate discontent or impatience, in the bosoms of this devoted pair. What availed the evils opposed to their felicities, when glowing aspirations towards a happy and glorious future, bade them disdain the present petty obstructions placed between them and their final destiny. Affection

\* In Carmarthenshire, South Wales.

the most pure and tender, connubial love, was ever present, to blunt the edge of distastefulness in their inauspicious days, and they could even afford to laugh at the shifts and discomforts, incidental to their houseless, homeless, semi-savage condition; while meaner spirits would have sunk under such inflictions.

It was in the year 1116, that the events just narrated took place. Determined to win a better home for his lovely bride, with the utmost speed Griffith ab Rees collected the adherents of his cause and the long-established friends of his family, around him in the forest of Ystrad Towey, and made them acquainted with his plans and the courses which he meant to pursue for reconquering the long-lost British sovereignty of the country. At the head of these faithful friends he issued forth and commenced immediate hostilities against the Normans and Flemings. Success attended all his movements, and he destroyed several strong castles belonging to the English. On his forces increasing, which was a daily occurrence, he extended his warlike operations into that strong hold of the English and Flemings, the district of Pembroke, even to this day called Little England beyond Wales; but kept aloof from the possessions of his brother-in-law Gerald de Windsor. Elated with his career of success and grown audacious in his daring, he even menaced with a siege the strong castle of Carmarthen, which the king of England had made the principal seat of his government. The Norman officers who had the charge of this fortress, struck with the daring character of Griffith ab Rees's operations, judging that their own forces were insufficient to maintain the place, sent for the Welsh chieftains who were the sworn vassals of the king of England, requiring each of them, with their followers, to defend the castle in their turns for fourteen days; and accordingly the fortress was delivered into their custody. Owen ab Caradoc whose mother was a daughter of Bleddyn ab Cynvin was the first on whom its defence devolved. Learning from the spies whom he had sent to reconnoitre the strength of the place, that the works were assailable, Griffith ab Rees suddenly invested it.

The spirited manner in which this powerful fortress was attacked and carried, has been more minutely recorded than the generality of such actions; and may give some idea of the resistless impetuosity with which this gallant prince conducted his various enterprizes of this description. It appears that his mode of attacking castles was not unlike the manner of our sailors in boarding the ship of an enemy. Griffith ab Rees and his followers, in the imperfect light of the declining day made their way towards any guarded part of the castle, and contrived in secrecy and silence to climb or scale the battlements. When the whole party had attained the summit of the walls they united in a terrific shout, that announced their presence to Owen ab Caradoc, and at the same time rushed forward, sword in hand, and assailed the bewildered foe. The temporary commandant, relying on the support of his garrison, dashed forward to repel the invaders. His gallant efforts however were unavailing; deserted by his soldiers who were supposed to be favourable to the cause of Griffith ab Rees and Welsh independence, Owen ab Caradoc was slain on the ramparts, and the castle yielded to the conquerors. The town of Carmarthen, inhabited entirely by the vassals or partizans of the king of England, was taken, plundered, and demolished; but the castle was only dismantled. Griffith ab Rees then wisely retreated; aware of the extensive combinations of his foes, to unite their forces for his destruction. The costly spoils of war taken in this splendid campaign, from the different fortresses which he had conquered, and lastly from the important town and castle of Carmarthen, enabled him to reward his followers amply; who, in high spirits and literally loaded with treasure, accompanied him on his return to his strong and temporary home in the forest of Ystrad Towey: where once more, he sought brief repose in the company of Gwenllian.

From motives of prudence that do credit to his sagacity he abstained for a while from making any particular demonstration of his strength, allowing it to accumulate before he again took the field; but from his forest camp, on the opportunities suggested to him from the reports of his spies,



or the country people, he occasionally issued forth, with a small but desperate band, and committed terrible havoc upon his enemies. His absence and retreat were alike so sudden, that in these superstitious times they appeared truly supernatural; and such were the rapidity and mystery of his movements, that neither friend nor foe could calculate upon his presence or absence. Thus was he at length, feared when far away, as if invisibly, close at hand; and when discovered to be so in reality, the terror of his name performed more than half the work of the sword and bow. Like the heroic Wallace of Scotland whom he resembled in many points, but whom he preceded about a century, he frequently rushed from his forest covert, and like the avenging spirit of his wronged country, dealt destruction upon its foreign occupants and oppressors. Woe to the tax-gatherers of those days—who in armed bodies issued from those strong holds of tyranny, the gloomy Norman castles, and wherever they could, either by bullying, cajoling, or the gently persuasive power of blows, compelled the poor tiller of the soil, personally and by his servants, to take the produce of his land, wood, corn, or cattle, to be consumed and devoured in those fearful dens of sensuality and brute coercion. The name of Griffith ab Rees, with the slightest demonstration of a force, we may imagine, has scattered not a few of such unceremonious visitors, and kept at home the booty intended for the lordly robber and his confederate followers and retainers. Woe to the Norman, Saxon, or Fleming, who ever ventured in slight strength, to wander from the shelter of their strong walls—the name of the Welsh liberator, shouted by a few of his partizans, even in his absence; would hurry homeward a host of such enemies, who could be fortunate enough to escape the swords of their assailants.

Griffith ab Rees had by this time gained considerable reputation as a leader, and won the confidence of the country. The people began to see in him their destined liberator from English bondage, and their future sovereign. The best patriots of the country, whose prudence had hitherto kept them aloof from the projects of a young untried adventurer, now, inspired with a sense of his high talents, great capa-



bility, and dauntless heroism, recognized in him also the genuine offspring of the gallant Rees ab Tudor, now rushed to his standard with ardour; in full belief that the day was approaching when he would recover the Cambrian sway and mount the long-vacated throne of South Wales.\*

Thus reinforced Griffith lost no time in pursuing his success, and once more came out in his strength, resigning for a while those conjugal endearments which had been to him so sweet a relaxation from the toils of war; and poor Gwenllian, now a mother, resigned herself again to the solitude of the forest, supported by the best hopes of a tranquil and felicitous future. Griffith soon made himself master, successively, of two more fortresses. These were the castle of Gower, in Glamorgan, and the castle of Kidwelly, in Carmarthen. He then retired again to his forest home, with the cattle and other spoil so bravely won, and so seasonably acquired for the food and pay of his army.

The acquisition of the castle of Kidwelly, of which he had deprived Maurice de Londres, one of the most stern, proud, and vindictive of the Anglo-Norman barons, in his bearing and retaliations on the Welsh who opposed the usurpations of his countrymen, makes an especial feature at this season of the career of Griffith ab Rees. It will be remembered by the reader, where we have stated in the memoir of Nest, daughter of Iestyn ab Gwrgant, how this district was invaded and torn from its original proprietors by William de Londres, the grandfather of this Maurice; and how the castle of Kidwelly was built to protect the dis-

\* We notice with indignation how Warrington, in his history of Wales, takes pleasure in assimilating the young prince to a robber chief, although fighting in the best cause that ever drew a patriot warrior's sword, the liberation of his country from the usurped occupation of ravaging murderous foreigners, whose aim was to annihilate the native deprived proprietors. That historian calls the spoils taken in war "booty," and "plunder;" and likens the heroic chieftain to a fierce tiger, issuing forth to ravage the country. The only motive which he assigns for the influx of Welshmen who at this time joined the army of Griffith, was the attraction of the "spoil," and the view of sharing in the future plunder of the enemy; although he cannot but admit "the fame which he had acquired drew to his standard great numbers of men, whose age and spirit were congenial to his own; and who admiring his courage and activity, felt a conviction of his ultimate success."

honest and unwarriorlike acquirement in question. Conceiving the winning of this fortress to be a signal retribution on the iniquitous proceedings of those who had erected it on land belonging to others, he seems to have enjoyed its possession beyond the rest of his conquests. It is supposed that at this period he made it his residence, and removed the Princess Gwenllian and his infant heir from the gloomy forest of Ystrad Towey to the security of its well-appointed walls and towers.

These and former exploits of Griffith ab Rees, his astonishing success against the massive walls and strongly garrisoned Norman castles, supported only by the naked valour, as we may term it, of his highly excited and patriotic mountaineers, had their due effect in influencing the minds of men, friends as well as foes. The fame of his heroic actions, as if borne on the wings of the wind, was carried far and wide; and served as much to strike his opponents with dismay as to nerve and inspirit his own partizans. At length the chieftains of Caredigion, or Cardigan, although noted for their slow calculating caution, (a characteristic which their descendants still retain,) espoused his cause with heart and hand; tendered their submission to his government, and sent a deputation to invite him to visit their country, with a promise to aid him in routing thence the foreigners, and punishing those natives of the district who continued in their vassalage to England and were opposed to the reactionary movements of the day. Delighted with such an instance of patriotism from a quarter so long infested by the Normans and the degenerate Welshmen, who had become the creatures of the English king, he lost no time in acceding to their proposal. He entered their territories in high heart; and was received with cordiality and honor;—such as faithful subjects might tender to an acknowledged sovereign, whose right to the southern throne was unquestionable. From the first hour of his entrance into this part of the country, the most northern district of South Wales, Griffith maintained the high reputation which he had previously gained. With his usual rapidity of movement, and startling presence where least expected, he appeared sud-

denly with his forces in Cardigan Iscoed, and laid siege to a fortress which the earl of Striguil had erected at Blaenporth Gwithan. This castle held out bravely for many hours; but after a hard contest, where victory was most obstinately sought by each party, after sustaining many assaults and great destruction of human life, it yielded at length; and Griffith ab Rees caused it to be burnt to the ground. It is recorded that this victory cost the winner but the life of one man—an astonishing proof of his excellent arrangements, and the good fortune which attended his expeditions: and well would it have been for him and his cause had these continued, but the brilliance of his career was soon to be dimmed by the gathering clouds of adversity.

The victor then shaped his course towards Penwedic, principally inhabited by the English and their Welsh partizans. Aware that they would become the peculiar objects of his vengeance, these people fled with the utmost dismay from the approach of the Welsh army, and their deserted houses were stripped and burnt to the ground. In brief space after this he laid siege to a fortress called Ystrad Peithyll, in Cardigan, belonging to the steward of the earl of Striguil, which he took by assault; and with a severity by no means commendable, however excusable on the score of retaliating vengeance, which marked the barbarous spirit of the times, he put the garrison to the sword.

Here may be said to terminate the prosperous part of the career of Griffith ab Rees. His future attempts to recover the throne of his ancestors will be found marked with disasters unknown to his earlier movements. Nor was Fortune alone to blame as the sole cause of his reverses; as we no longer can trace the same line of conduct, the wise precautionary fact, nor even the same intrepidity which formerly insured the invariable success of his enterprises. Although our main object has been to put forth every attainable record of the life of his wife Gwenllian, our discerning readers who are conversant with Welsh history will be aware how scanty are the notices of that princess until circumstances altered her position, and from the gentle wife of a hero she became herself a heroine—a change of character



as disadvantageous to her, as it proved fatal in the end, however admirable in the peculiarity of its features. Thus it will be conceded that it was indispensable that the achievements of Griffith ab Rees should be detailed, in order to indicate the exact standing of Gwenllian herself—her mere position—the utmost that could be done, with due regard to historical fidelity. With this apology for her long absence from view, and her meagre personal records, we return to the national movements of her times—whose floods at length were to bear the intrepid little barque of her fortunes into publicity—only to sweep it to destruction.

On the conquest of Ystrad Peisyll castle Griffith marched his army towards Aberystwith castle, with the view of capturing, and adding that powerful fortress to the rest of his conquests. His deviations from his former wise courses were immediately apparent on his arrival there. Instead of appearing suddenly with his army before the castle, like a host of demons bursting from a thunder-cloud, and commencing an instantaneous attack, while the foe was under a panic of surprise and terror, as in former instances, he resolved on encamping his exhausted army at Plas Creeg,\* at a short distance and within sight of the threatened fortress, and giving them a day's rest. Doubtless such rest and recruiting of their exhausted strength and spirits after their late exertions were highly needful; but all that should have been effected before his arrival at the place of his final destination—and in such secrecy as the wild country through which they passed, easily admitted; and within the distance of a short march from the scene of his intended operations. As one error is generally a leader to another, in addition to this military blunder, he ordered or permitted his soldiers to seize and slay for their food certain cattle, then feeding within the precincts of the great sanctuary church of Llanbadan-vawr, in the immediate neighbourhood of the place of his encampment. This, as might have been expected, created him new enemies, who otherwise might have been his friends, or at least would have remained neutral during these con-

\* In Welsh written Plas Crŷg, but the latter word is pronounced Creeg.

tentions. The indignant priesthood, keenly tenacious of their privileges and the inviolability of their sacred order, vindictively sensitive to the scorn and defiance implied by this offence were artful and malignant enough to place him in the light of a profane man, the declared foe of the church itself, and a sacrilegious violator both of human and divine ordinances. It certainly detracts from the merit of this chieftain, whom we have been justified in regarding hitherto both as a wise prince and a generous hero, that his characteristic shrewdness could not have anticipated these results; and that he should have forgotten his deep obligations to an institution like this, whose rights he now violated; as he doubtless owed the preservation of his life to the monks of the sanctuary of Aberdaron, when menaced by Griffith ab Kunnan, as the agent of the king of England. It has been urged in extenuation of this fatal step, that however impolitic, the exhausted state of the Welsh army made the measure indispensable; but had Griffith ab Rees encamped and refreshed his forces elsewhere, as before suggested, both his first and second blunder could have been avoided. The consequences of both these errors immediately followed their commission. The governor of Aberystwith castle sent to Ystrad Meyric castle, the nearest English military station, for a reinforcement; and it is highly probable that the willing messenger dispatched on this occasion, was one of the monks belonging to the sanctuary establishment of Llanbadan vawr, whose irritated feelings would make him the ready instrument of the revenge of his brotherhood; while the sacredness of the priestly character would enable him to pass unquestioned by either the Welsh or English, when every other description of person was liable to be arrested in his progress by the soldiery or partizans of Griffith ab Rees.

The reinforcement, however, was duly sent, and arrived in the course of the night at Aberystwith castle; which could not have happened had a vigilant watch been kept through the night, and the picquets and sentinels of the Welsh been on their guard. Thus when Griffith brought his army next day to invest the castle, the governor was



fully prepared for his reception. Ignorant of all this, the Welsh prince, with his usual confidence, assured his army of the certainty of their success, if they behaved with their former intrepidity. The relaxation of discipline consequent upon their late festal enjoyment, which was probably attended with a dissipated indulgence in drink, however, had given the soldiers a disorderly impulse; and Griffith upon this eventful occasion appeared incapable of keeping under due restriction a tumultuous body of men, who seemed more disposed to follow their own respective notions and inclinations, than yield obedience to the dictates of their prince and commander, who had so frequently led them on to victory. Consequences the most fatal speedily ensued. The English governor, who appears to have been a brave and sagacious commander, lured the Welsh into a labyrinth of inextricable difficulties, which he had prepared for them. A body of mounted troops suddenly issued from the castle, and rode off with eager speed in the direction of Mount Pendinas, without any indication of entering on immediate conflict further than self-defence, in case of being attacked, and to cut their way through any impediments thrown in their course. A large portion of the Welsh army, with blind impetuosity, immediately rushed to encounter it, following their foes across the river Rheidol, to the foot of Pendinas hill. Behind that mount the English governor had placed an ambuscade, consisting of a large detachment of his forces. The moment the Welsh were thus decoyed to cross the river, the party which they had pursued suddenly faced about to attack them; at the same time the party in ambush rushed forward to their aid. Discovering their inveiglement too late, and the hopelessness of successfully engaging such an overwhelming force, they attempted flight, in the direction they came; but found their retreat cut off by a division of English archers, which lined the opposite bank of the Rheidol, that had occupied the point immediately on their crossing it, and thus irretrievably fell into the snare so adroitly prepared for them. Thus hemmed in by enemies on all sides, the Welshmen saw that nothing remained for them but to fight to the last, and to die like

gallant men, sword in hand. A desperate conflict ensued; but surrounded as they were by such superior numbers, although battling with the fury of despair, overwhelmed at length, they sank beneath the multitude of foes, and to a man were cut to pieces.

Prince Griffith, who remained with the main body of his army before Aberystwith castle, was speedily informed of this disastrous issue, and soon saw the triumphant troopers returning, with their blooded swords ostentatiously displayed, and preparing to assail the remnant of his army. A powerful force from the castle made a spirited sortie in the opposite direction, and soon the engagement became general. The Welsh, with their usual impetuosity, fought desperately; but found themselves overmatched by the united forces of the two castles, and giving way at length, in a panic of despair, commenced a disorderly flight. In the pursuit many were cut to pieces; and Prince Griffith himself, for the first time during his military career, had to seek his safety in the general flight, and it was with considerable difficulty he escaped with his life.

These were direful tidings for poor Gwenllian. It is probable that Griffith was the bearer of them himself; and that, foreseeing how his foes would pursue their advantages, he removed his wife from Kidwelly castle, and again sought refuge with her in his old haunts, the forest of Ystrad Towey.

On this part of the life of Griffith ab Rees, Warrington judiciously remarks. "The conduct of this prince, which brightened his early life, promised to open with still greater lustre; but the disaster which he had lately experienced, or perhaps a diminished reputation, seems to have given a check to his career, and to have cooled the ardour of his enterprising spirit."

Encouraged by the evil fortunes which had befallen the Welsh prince, Henry I., king of England, now aimed at his utter destruction; and agreeable to the unscrupulous pirate policy of the Norman race of sovereigns, determined on having him taken off by assassination. For this dark purpose he engaged the services of Owen ab Cadwgan, the

most atrocious and determined villain to be found among the degenerate Welshmen of those times. The particulars of the attempt, failure, and death of that notorious ruffian, have been narrated in our memoir of the Lady Nest, wife of Gerald de Windsor, and sister to Griffith ab Rees, to which we refer the reader. In this mission of murder, to the performance of which he was piously sworn on the Evangelists by the "scholar king," Henry Beauclerc, the "merrie monarch" of the twelfth century, Owen ab Cadwgan marked out for himself a peculiar line of policy, certainly worthy of himself, his ferocious confederate, Llewarch, son of Trahaern ab Caradoc, and his equally savage employer. This was, to seek his intended victim amid the fastnesses of the forest in his retreat of Ystrad Towey—to slaughter every inhabitant in that district, and burn each dwelling to the ground; so that it would be impossible for Prince Griffith either to find a roof to shelter him, or to escape in disguise. Notwithstanding this diabolical scheme, which as far as he was able, he carried into effect to the last hour of his pernicious life, the miserable miscreant perished himself, in that very forest which he had destined to be a fiery furnace for the destruction of every creature, human or otherwise, within its boundary.

Of the earliest entrance of Owen and his myrmidons into the forest, fortunately Prince Griffith gained timely intelligence; and with his wife and infant family, assisted by some of their attached friends and domestics, got safely out of the reach of danger, leaving behind them all their domestic and other worldly possessions a prey for the rapacity of the depredators. The details of their escape, or where next they sheltered or sojourned, have found no record in the pages of history; but it is evident that in these evil times they found friends among the patriots of the land, by whom they were served, loved, revered, and intensely honored. However harsh these calamitous visitations were to Griffith himself, they could not be otherwise than doubly severe to Gwenllian—a delicate female and a young mother—as well as to the children of tender age. But this generous daughter of a reigning sovereign, and wife of a refugee prince, sus-

tained her trials and endured the gall and wormwood of her lot with the sublimated spirit of a heroine and a martyr; and, as we shall soon see, upheld these glorious characteristics to the latest hour of her existence.

Although Prince Griffith was fortunate enough to escape the dagger of the assassin, and the horrors of suffocation in the fired forest, yet he had to endure the bitter fortune of being deserted by his former partizans, the minions of his prosperous days; who now imagined that the splendid dream of his rising fortunes, and the liberation of the country from the odious government of foreigners, was but a vision of delusion that never could be realized. Many of these not only reentered into vassalage to the king of England, but actually turned their arms against the unfortunate prince, their late leader, victorious commander, and legitimate sovereign. Thus he was not only forsaken by his natural subjects, but stood in continual peril of assassination by other secret emissaries of England, so that he found it necessary to seek a secret abiding place, probably often changed, and to venture abroad only in disguise. The faithful Gwenllian, however, solaced him in his solitude, and encouraged his hopes of better times, evincing her devotedness to his person and broken fortunes as ardently in those dark days of danger, destitution, and despondency, as in those hours of brilliant vision when the star of his destiny seemed ascending to the zenith of permanent success.

Although this deplorable disorder of affairs lasted several years, we have no account of any of the occurrences in the family of Prince Griffith; the only details which have floated down the tide of time are those which record that several children born to Griffith and Gwenllian, were nursed and instructed by their parents in these days of adversity, that in after time did credit to their parentage. But neither the innocence nor bravery of the youthful unfortunates, as will soon be seen, could preclude them from the general fate of Cambrian patriots, of having their names inscribed on the awful tablet of national calamity. Other insurgent chieftains arose in arms against the king of England—worthless men, who, in order to be supported in possessions unjustly ob-

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tained, yielded servile vassalage to the English crown; but on feeling the galling weight of the yoke they had bargained for, evinced a turbulent desire to assert the independence which they had so basely sold, aiming at the same time to dignify their selfish quarrel by the hallowed designation of patriotism. From such as these Griffith ab Rees proudly stood aloof, disdaining the slightest participation in their affairs. But there were other reasons why he could make no common cause with these men, whatever might be their undertakings, which will be perceivable when it is stated who they were. They were no other than the three brothers of the late atrocious Owen ab Cadwgan, and their uncle Meredith, the sole survivor of the three sons of Bleddyn ab Cynvin—the most servile of the unworthy Welshmen of the times, who became the ready instruments in the hands of Henry for subduing the liberties of their country. The hostile feeling between this base family and Prince Griffith doubtless received considerable accession by the circumstance that their kinsman, Owen ab Caradoc, had met his death at his hand, although in fair fight, on the ramparts of Carmarthen castle, on the storming of that fortress in 1116.

In the year 1121 the king of England entered Wales in hostile array, for the ostensible purpose of punishing those vassals who had revolted from their allegiance; but doubtless Henry calculated that the crushing vengeance with which he had threatened them might be made to fall on Griffith ab Rees, as his principal victim, for whose destruction in various ways he had laboured so long, and whose existence, as the living representative of Welsh sovereignty in the South, was the grand source of his disquietude, and the only bar to the annexation of that principality to the English crown. Henry was too imperiously proud to recognise the dignified bearing of Prince Griffith, in thus absenting himself from a battle field in which he was not a principal, and where the stake in the game of war was anything less than the crown of his ancestors. Although opposed by adversaries of far inferior pretension and capacity to Griffith ab Rees, King Henry found warfare among the Welsh



mountains no holiday pastime, and soon returned to England without accomplishing the objects of his ostentatious threats, and narrowly escaped with his life.

Construing the long cessation of Griffith ab Rees from active operations against England in no other light than the probable one that he was secretly preparing a general rise in the country to favor his pretensions, he resolved on a new line of conduct towards that unhappy prince. Veiling his concession under the assumption of an act of grace for not being in arms against him in the late hostilities, he offered him the secure possession of certain domains of limited extent, on the terms that he should no more make war on English subjects, or the Welsh vassals of England. Either from despair of success, owing to the evil aspect of the times, or a tender regard for the matronly comforts of his long-enduring wife Gwenllian, to secure for whom a tranquil home once more, at whatever cost, must have been one of the dearest objects of his life; he was induced to accede to this proposal, and accepted the offer. Such a public acknowledgment of the delusion of his aspiring hopes, as was implied by this acceptance, was doubtless immensely galling to his feelings, but the sacrifice, however great, had become imperiously indispensable, perhaps, to the very existence of the beloved partner of his sufferings and perils, who was no longer able to stand up against the continued buffets of adversity.

The locality of their new home is not on record, but wherever it was, it appears to have been surrounded by the liegemen of England, under whose surveillance they passed their cheerless days. In this equivocal asylum, brooding over their broken fortunes, Griffith and his wife, the subject of this memoir, with their young family, lived a quiet retired life for the space of six years. It is to be inferred, they were never on gracious terms with either the Norman lords or their Welsh partizans during this period; and that the only society acceptable to them would be that of the known patriots of the land, who like themselves moved joylessly about under the settled gloom of adversity. But even this state of sepulchral tranquillity was destined to be brought

to brief termination, and the sufferers to be thrown again on the turbulent ocean of worldly cares and dissension. In the year 1127, the sixth of their sojourn in this prison-like retreat, a complaint was made to King Henry against Prince Griffith, the nature of which has never transpired, although all the historians agree in terming the charge "fictitious." Probably the haughty Normans felt chagrined at the lofty bearing assumed by the prince; and as he neither visited them or received their visits, nothing could be more likely that they should describe those whom he *did* receive, as the supposed or known enemies of the king, and consequently to insinuate or audaciously assert that he was secretly hatching a new rebellion. On this charge Prince Griffith was deprived of his domain, and with his wife and family, again became houseless, homeless, and in fact, a fugitive in his native land, of which he was the rightful sovereign. Warrington states and remarks on this passage in his life, "though given for the support of his family, or to secure his fidelity, this estate was however taken from him by Henry, on a fictitious charge brought against him by the Normans near whom he resided. There was something singular and cruel in thus driving a prince into want, dependence, and despair, in the very country of which he was the natural sovereign."

Under these grievous circumstances, nothing consolatory remained for them but that poor Gwenllian should accompany her husband, and take to the forest life once more, within the leafy wilderness of Ystrad Towey. The charred and burnt trees and the ruins of human dwellings, the happy homes of many of their devoted followers, effected by the inhuman fury of Owen ab Cadwgan, gave the earliest indication of the sad change which had taken place since the departure of the family thence; among which, on a further advance into the recesses of the wood, the destruction of their former rude, but ponderously secure dwelling place, was the most affecting and melancholy spectacle. It was there, a spot especially endeared to her, Gwenllian could not but remember, with the tenderest feelings of a mother, that all her children first saw the light of the turbulent world,

in which they were so early called upon to enact their parts. These were her three boys :—Rhys, born in 1117, and now in his tenth year, and his two brothers, Maelgwn and Morgan, who were twins, a year younger. In brief space, with the affectionate aid of the strongly attached cottars of the forest, Griffith with his active sons and willing servants, soon reared another capacious and secure dwelling, of which the hoary fathers of the ancient wood formed the principal materials. And here, the high-hearted family of royal fugitives, reposing once more within the arms of liberty, although sharing the savage haunts of the wolf, the wild boar, and the deer, felt their bosoms glow and their hearts dilate, as the breeze of freedom invigorated their frames and buoyed up their future hopes—now that no despot's minions blighted their intercourse with the expanded eye of espial and malignant observance—when the open ear of the eaves-dropper no longer caught their accents, and checked the free expression of their thoughts and feelings, or the poisonous tongue of obloquy could no longer forge the unfounded tale of accusation, to drive them into further destitution, at the imperious mandate of a foreign tyrant.

Tidings of the expulsion of Prince Griffith and his family by the Normans, and of their return to Ystrad Towey, soon reached and gladdened his friends in various districts far and near, and many assembled round him, to render present aid, and to assist in whatever enterprizes he might plan for the future. Thus, while occasionally acting the part of the intrepid hunter, or supplying his family board, he continued his former mode of warfare against the English, although necessarily on a reduced scale, for eight years of severe trial (from 1127 to 1135), when a political event occurred of astounding interest, that immediately changed the aspect of his affairs, and filled his heart with all the glowing ardour and the ambitious aspirations of his early life. These buoyant and exhilarating sensations were equally shared by our gallant Gwenllian; who had fared and battled with so many troubles by his side; and their mutual enthusiasm was naturally imbibed by their hopeful sons, when the new events of the hour were explained to them.

The agitating and all-engrossing event to which we refer was the death of that mortal enemy of the Welsh, and determined appropriator of their country, King Henry I. of England. This occurred in the year 1135, when the usurpation of Stephen, which caused a civil war in England, immediately followed. These auspicious tidings were no sooner spread over the Cambrian territory than the whole country, North and South, seemed in a ferment of agitation, deeming the time at length arrived for casting off the English yoke, and a general revolt speedily followed. Gwenllian had the satisfaction to learn, from information received by her husband from the North, that her aged father Griffith ab Kunnan now held himself free of the promises extorted from him by the late king, and with his gallant sons Owen, Gwyneth, and Cadwalader, was among the foremost to encourage the revolt to reconquer the liberties of their country.

With such brightened prospects flashing on their imagination a vivid change came over this long-depressed family; all was excitement and mental renovation; and these feelings, like the products of a tropic summer, seemed to burst into leaf, flower, and fruitage simultaneously. Prince Griffith erected his war camp in the neighbouring open country adjoining the forest. The national colours of Wales, the renowned Red Dragon, on its field of green, floated from the top of the highest tree, denuded of its lower branches, so as to give it the appearance of a gigantic flag-staff; and seemed by its presence to tell the history of its elevation, interpreted by its enthusiastic beholders as a prognostic of its ultimate triumph—thus inviting the patriots of the long-oppressed land to place their hopes and enlist their energies under that banner of their independence. The new spirit of the times, with electric force and rapidity in its universal transmission, seemed to pervade all bosoms. The natural subjects of Griffith, the men of South Wales, rushed forward from their various districts to offer their immediate services; so that in brief space a large concourse of people, which were daily and hourly increasing, were seen assembled round him. Gwenllian now freed from the domestic duties of rearing



her offspring, her eldest son being eighteen, and the younger twin boys seventeen years of age, now proved she was equally capable of shining in a very different sphere, appeared actively engaged in welcoming, encouraging, and entertaining these supporters of their own personal and the national cause, who thronged so numerous towards Ystrad Towey. Thus while the Normans and Flemings quailed within their castle walls, at these, to them, disastrous signs of the times, the Welsh rejoined to the melody of their many harpers and minstrels, or listened with deep attention and entire credence to the graver bards, who united with their poetic art the province of sooth-sayers, and were prodigal of their favourable prophecies of the eventual success of their arms in the coming struggle.

"After recovering his lands, (dominions) in 1135, Griffith ab Rees, had a large feast prepared in Ystrad Towey, whither he invited all to come in peace from North Wales, Powys, South Wales, Glamorgan, and the marshes. And he prepared everything that was good in meat and drink, wise conversations, songs, and music; and welcomed all poets and musicians; and instituted various plays, illusions, and appearances, and many exercises. And to the feast there came Griffith ab Kunnan and his sons, and many chieftains of various parts of Wales, and the feast was kept up for forty days, and all were allowed to depart, and the bards, musicians, learned men, and performers of every sort were honourably rewarded. After the feast Griffith ab Rees invited the wise men, and scholars, and consulting them, instituted rule and law on every person within his dominions; and fixed a court in every Cantrev, and an inferior court in every Comot. Griffith ab Kunnan did the same in North Wales; and the Normans and Saxons, sorry to see this, made complaints against these princes to King Stephen, who stating that he knew not where the blame lay, declined to interfere." A very wise conclusion of the considerate King Stephen. Doubtless these astounding revivals, and other unmistakable signs of recovering national independence among the Welsh, must have been gall and wormwood to the deeply mortified barons of England, who



had been signally overthrown and driven out of the country where they had acquired immense possessions, built mighty castles, and so long exercised an unbounded usurped authority. And as to the poor usurper King Stephen, he was too deeply overwhelmed with his own perplexed affairs and the slight and dubious tenure on which he held his crown, to undertake the office of umpire, between his subject barons and the recovering fortunes of the principality of South Wales.

In his long-enforced seclusion, Griffith ab Rees had evidently reflected deeply on his former miscarriages, and profiting by the stern lessons of adversity, which he wisely digested in his solitude, did not allow the present favorable appearances to elevate his hopes with undue buoyancy. He shrewdly foresaw the necessity of a very powerful force to carry out his designs, and therefore came to a resolution of visiting North Wales, the dominions of his father-in-law, where, he conceived, by the aid of that prince, he might obtain a reinforcement of disciplined troops, that would enable him, with the assistance of his native subjects, to prosecute the war with the vigor essential to so great an enterprize. Gwenllian heartily concurred in this proposal to visit her father's court, and conceived that even if the old prince should prove cool in the matter, that with the assured influence of her venerable mother and brothers, the happiest results would follow. It was settled that young Rees their eldest son should accompany his father, so that he should bear with him the best credentials for insuring a kind reception from the whole family, when their grandson was presented to the aged sovereigns—the elder son of their long-lost darling young daughter. Accordingly Griffith ab Rees and his son took an affectionate leave of Gwenllian, with the understanding that their return would be as speedy as the urgent necessity for his presence at home demanded.

Alas, unhappy father and husband, and fond unhappy youth, whose cheeks are wet with the tears of parting—and alas for her, the more unhappy wife and mother—whose hopeful heart enabled her to endure this temporary separation! little thought either that the farewell was to be

eternal, but so it proved—as our few remaining records of the life of this most unhappy and meritorious lady will too sadly declare, they have seen each other's love-beaming agitated faces for the last time in this life.

Thus Gwenllian was left, with her two sons, Maelgwn and Morgan, whilst Prince Griffith and young Rees on their hardy mountain steeds pursued their journey towards North Wales. To those unacquainted with certain points in the national character of the Welsh, and indeed peculiar to the Celtic race generally, it may appear strange that this shrewd and clever prince should not appoint one of the chieftains to command in chief during his temporary absence. But Griffith knew the character of his countrymen better. However obedient to him as their acknowledged sovereign and supreme leader, like all semi-barbarous people, the natives of the different districts of which these forces were composed, they would obey none but their own native chiefs; so that to give one the command over the rest, would be seen in no other light than an insult, a preference originating in mere favoritism; as these ill-informed men were so intensely imbued with their local egotism, that they were utterly incapable of recognizing the superior fitness for command in any stranger, however eminent his qualifications. In proof of this species of jealousy, we find when the Welsh chieftains became commandants to defend the castles which they had captured, or when in the same position as English vassals, instead of those fortresses having one perpetual governor, each claimed his turn to command; and they were consequently changed, sometimes as frequently as every ten days—to prevent the heart-burnings, insubordination, and withdrawal with their forces in disgust, which would otherwise have been the certain consequence.

Although these untrained men from various parts of the principality which constituted the new-formed army, rigidly adhered to their system of obeying no power beneath the sovereign except their own respective chieftains, still they vied with each other in their courteous deferential carriage towards Gwenllian and her sons; and were not only as respectful towards her as if prince Griffith were present, but,

in consideration of her sex and peculiar position, even more yielding and affectionate in their approaches. Indeed her dignified demeanour was so commingled with the simplicity of non-assumption, and her kindly and equal bearing towards all, wisely eschewing personal preference to any, that she could not fail with such a people, to win their respect and reverence. We can imagine her during their casual disputes on their return from their foraging and hunting expeditions, propitiating the most resentful and turbulent spirits, by exciting their self-esteem, reminding them how far it was beneath men of their eminence, engaged in the noblest of human undertakings, that of clearing their native soil from the odious sway of foreigners, to waste their energies on private broils and circumstances of trivial import: while with others, the conciliating tone of persuasive friendliness would work their warring natures into the gentlest mood of compliance—even eager to give up the most galling points which caused dissension, to win her smile of approbation. But notwithstanding the influence which her talents created among these rugged but warm-hearted mountaineers, her situation was very trying and soon became fraught with difficulties utterly unforeseen.

The numerous forays and skirmishes in which Griffith ab Rees and his followers had been engaged for the last eight years had been very destructive to the Normans of the neighbouring castles, whose foragers, purveyors, and men at arms they had cut off in vast numbers, with but little loss to themselves. Those belonging to the castle of Kidwelly had been the principal objects of his hostility, in consequence of the base manner in which that district had been reft from its original proprietors, and the castle erected to protect the unjust appropriation. The number of the garrison thus destroyed was so considerable that Maurice de Londres found it indispensable to recruit the thinned ranks of his people; and for this purpose had sent to England for a reinforcement, which had been for some time expected. Although prince Griffith was aware of this circumstance, he calculated on his return from North Wales before these forces could arrive, and therefore gave no orders, nor made

any provision for cutting off this seasonable supply to the enemy, in case of their landing before his return. It is probable that about a week after his departure, some of the scouts employed to watch the coast came hastily to Gwenllian, and informed her of the actual landing of the expected English forces on the coast of Glamorgan.

It will now be seen that Gwenllian was a proper partner for a hero like prince Griffith. Embarrassing as this momentous circumstance was, it immediately occurred to her that if her lord was present and received such intelligence, that he would immediately summon his men, and with them hasten forth and waylay and cut off these approaching enemies, so as to prevent them from ever reaching the place of their destination. Therefore she saw the necessity of pursuing a similar course; and as no time was to be lost, the present was the season of instantaneous action. For the reasons already assigned she knew it would be too dangerous an experiment to give the command of the whole forces to any one of the chieftains; but saw no other alternative than offering to become herself their supreme leader in the expedition. To apprize them of her views, she summoned together all the chieftains, and informed them of this Norman movement, and the immediate necessity for opposing it, with the probable consequence to themselves if their enemies were permitted to acquire such immense additional strength. In conclusion she modestly offered her own person to lead them to the attack, provided they could put faith in the courage and conduct of a woman on so important an occasion. Recognizing in this gallant offer the heroic sister of Owen Gwyneth, and the undegenerate daughter of an illustrious house whose far-famed progenitors gave an additional claim to their ever trusting faith, the proposal was received with enthusiastic approbation. When the army were informed of the circumstance, their acclamations of applause were astounding; all professing their admiration of her heroic determination, and vowing to obey and protect her to the last moment of their existence.

Alive to the exigencies of the times, with thorough military alacrity, Gwenllian was the first in readiness for an

instantaneous departure. Mounted on one of the sturdy sure-footed galloways, of which Griffith kept many ready at all times for such sudden emergencies, although not the most stately of war-steeds, yet the best species of cavalry which the country afforded, the gallant lady rode forth. On either side of her rode her brave excited boys Maelgwn and Morgan, proud of their novel position and resolved to win renown on the coming occasion. Vieing with each other in their devotedness to her service, her chieftains surrounded her person, while the different divisions of the foot soldiery under their various officers, occupied the van and rear; and thus they moved on, as preconcerted, in thorough silence, and the utmost order conceivable.

The route from the forest of Ystrad Towey to Kidwelly in a direct course might be about twenty miles; but in their deviation from the side of the river Towey, and circuitous windings through unfrequented ways, in order to elude observation, and to come suddenly into the neighbourhood of the hostile fortress, the march was extended to double that distance. After resting a night on their way, the next day brought them in sight of the towers of Kidwelly castle. Keeping further off, they passed quietly on, for obvious reasons avoiding to make any demonstration till they were two miles below the castle; where Gwenllian posted her army at the foot of the mountain called Mynydd y Garreg, with the river Gwendraeth in her front; being on the opposite bank to that on which the castle of Kidwelly stood. Gratified to learn through the information of her scouts that the expected reinforcements had not reached the castle, but, were undoubtedly now on the march, following the counsel of her chiefs, she now divided her army, dispatching the larger portion in the direction of Glamorgan to intercept the expected convoys, while the rest remained on the spot, under her command.

As we are now approaching the sad catastrophe that so tragically terminated the existence of the lady of this memoir, it is necessary to submit the following considerations to the attention of the reader. History having recorded only the ultimate result of this expedition, without the intermediate chain of



details necessary for our perception and general comprehension, we are therefore thrown entirely on our conjectures as to the manner in which the grand denouement was brought to its close. From our knowledge of the scene of these occurrences and acquaintance with the traditions of the country, that suggest a train of analogous reasonings, the insertion of which, however, would greatly encumber this narrative, we conceive the following to bear the most veritable aspect of probability.

On the second day of Gwenllian's occupation of this post, the Welsh forces occupying the height of Mynydd y Garreg were suddenly driven in with terrible slaughter by an overwhelming force. This was no other than the reinforcements so long expected at the castle, that under the conduct of a Welsh renegade named Griffith ab Llewellyn, sent to meet and conduct them, had eluded the vigilance of Gwenllian's detachment dispatched to oppose them; and forming a circuitous line of march along the most wild and least suspectable routes imaginable, had thus, like a thunderclap, burst over the brow of Mynydd y Garreg, and commenced their furious assault on the army of the Welsh princess, whose situation had doubtlessly been previously made known to them by their spies. The approach of their long expected forces being certified to the castle, simultaneously with their descent from the mountain, the Baron Maurice de Londres headed a mighty sortie from the fortress, and having crossed the upper part of the river, rushed forward and made an equally violent attack on the Welsh, taking them in flank on the side opposite to that engaged by the other assailants. Thus this doomed remnant of the Cambrian army was hemmed in between the two parties of assailants, composed probably of the entire strength of the castle, consisting of Normans, English, and their own subservient allies, the Flemings. Although the Welsh, with their usual bravery in the hour of desperate conflict, encouraged by the voice and gestures of their dauntless princess, who led the attack, fought with the most determined resolution, their resistance was in vain; and the result, ever to be expected when a small force is opposed to a greater, under the disadvantages of position, number, and discipline,

became their unhappy lot. The larger portion of this gallant band was cut to pieces, and the rest surrounded and taken prisoners. Among the latter was the heroic Gwenllian and her son Morgan: the wretched mother suffering from a wound she had received, but more intensely from having seen her other son, Maelgwn, killed at her side, while warding off the blows aimed at his parent, to the last moment of his existence, presented a mournful picture for contemplation—dignified to the last, but pallid with exhaustion and suppressed agony, calmly resigned to whatever further ills the fortune of war might assign her.

During the ascendancy of their prince, the Norman name was extolled by its parasites, almost to a parallel with ancient Roman greatness, than which in reality the world could scarcely present a greater contrast, to the disparagement of the modern descendants of freebooters. That name was associated with generous heroism, and the courtesies of chivalry—that hollow heartless fiction, which imposed on the world a semblance for reality, of what was supposed to be a movement towards human civilization. If it be imagined that these barons, so proud of their knightly honours, carried the much vaunted attributes of chivalry into the field of battle, and extended any degree of mercy or generosity towards a fallen foe, let the dupes of the infatuation disabuse their minds at once from the influence of such ill-founded errors, and note well what History declares was their conduct in their dealings with the Welsh patriots who fell into their power: and most especially in the flagrant case under present consideration.

Their illustrious captive was a woman—overwhelmed with heart-crushing calamities; claims sufficient to engage every feeling of commiseration in the bosoms of manly warriors. She was wounded in the conflict, and besides her corporeal suffering, she endured the severest mental agony for the death of her valiant son just slain in her defence. She was of supreme high rank, daughter of the illustrious reigning sovereign of North Wales, wife of the rightful claimant of the throne of South Wales and had distinguished herself so gallantly in this fatal action as indisputably to

have earned the title of a heroine, that might have won the admiration of a liberal foe. Surely these were touching claims on the magnanimity of a humane conqueror, setting aside the boasted "gentle Norman blood," and chivalrous pride of knighthood, arrogated to themselves by this race, and still assigned to them by the writers of romance, as contradistinguished from the supposed rude and ferocious attributes of the native Britons. Yet with all these forcible appeals to the best feelings of humanity, and to those artificial distinctions of which men who had felt the ennobling sword of royalty on their shoulders, their knighthood, forsooth! then felt proud, the moment Gwenllian became the prisoner of the Normans her fate was sealed. In a furious spirit of hasty vindictiveness, difficult to be understood except as a revolting occurrence incidental to barbarian warfare, where the rampant savage victor exults and riots amidst the gore and groans of his expiring victims, Maurice de Londres ordered her immediate execution, as if she had been a public criminal of his own nation, over whom he held legitimate command. And thus, amidst reviling enemies, and within the observance of her agonised son and captive countrymen, under the personal superintendence of the baron himself, and his second in command, the renegade Griffith ab Llewellyn, the head of the unhappy princess was struck off instant.

So lived, and thus inhumanly murdered, died the excellent Gwenllian; exemplary alike in the respective characters of daughter, sister, wife, and mother. Ill as we are inclined to exhibit for admiration a departure on the part of woman from the prescribed walks or usages of her sex, we have proved that Gwenllian was free from the slightest imputation of vanity or self-sufficiency in assuming the functions of a military commander. As before shown, the imperious pressure of events literally forced her into a position from which the previous modest tenor of her life evinces she would gladly have escaped, could any other plan for averting the impending danger have been available. Therefore, inspired by the signs of the alarming crisis foreshadowed in her mind, to spring forward at such a contingency, and in



the right spirit of the hour to occupy such a post of peril and responsibility, became in her a virtue of the highest order—when breaking the bonds of custom, and daringly original in her views, to become the representative of her absent husband, and the leader of his troops, at a time when very scanty prospects of glory shone on her destined path to allure her onwards. Who can contemplate the constancy of conjugal affection which distinguished her entire life without the most unqualified admiration? She did not, like some of our modern “fine ladies,” affect to have her sensibility wounded and overwhelmed by her husband’s troubles, and quitting him when the presence of a kind woman was most needed, hurry to the comforts and security of the paternal roof, and stay there till the *disarrangement of his affairs* were smoothed again for her return:—but in the virtuous spirit of true womanhood, kept at her post amidst the buffets of the wildest storm that beset him and his fortunes—ever at his side through weal and woe! And when had woman to share harsher or more long-enduring vicissitudes? It was not a matter of suffering for days, weeks, or months, but years—slowly dragging, or wildly tumultuous and danger-teeming years. Yet through all chances and changes, whether lodged in security within the castle tower, the peril surrounded mountain glen, or the savage seclusion of Ystrad Towey forest, or the still more dangerous shelter (accepted in haste and shunned as suddenly on the presentiment of evil), rendered by native traitors in the guise of friends. Still Gwenllian was there, with her three boys and gallant husband, whom she nurtured and taught, soothed and solaced, in suffering and sorrow—sheltered at her bosom or by her side amidst the pangs of exhausted nature, from hunger, fatigue, and well-founded terror, occurring in numerous unrecorded instances, during the wild life fate had awarded this doomed family of royal fugitives. Who can follow up the varied stages of her endurances, to the last moment of her invaluable existence, and not be ready to exclaim, with heart-full conviction of her priceless worth, “this was, indeed, a true, a wonderful, and a glorious woman!”

That once awe-inspiring dreary pile, the Norman fortress, whence issued the dire doomster\* and his ferocious train who compassed her destruction—what is it now? It stands only in fragmentary desolation, a fitting monument of its own downfall; and emblematic of the iron race that have passed away, whose corroded memory is foully associated with their deeds of blood and rapine. While the ever living earth on which Gwenllian stood—the self-same spot where she rallied her gallant people, that drank her blood as she fell a murdered prisoner, and that became her gory grave—is still as verdant in the pathetic memory of her fate, as with the green of each succeeding spring that clothes it with perpetual renovation. And while Mynydd y Garreg rears its head aloft, and the gentle Gwendraeth rolls its current towards the ocean, that memorable field of sad associations will ever bear her name; will ever bear historic interest enough to draw the Cambrian patriot to the scene of her exploits, sufferings, and sepulture; and call from him the touching utterance of its designation, in his native mother tongue—**MAES GWENLLIAN.**

It is a remarkable circumstance in the history of this greatly injured princess, that the influence of Gwenllian did not cease with her existence; but strange as veritable, seemed to acquire tenfold vigour when the once honoured bearer of it “slept the sleep that dreams not.” This is no flourish of rhetoric to garnish a figure of speech, but a literal statement of reality, which we shall proceed to explain. It will ultimately be seen that the name, associated with the wrongs of an heroic princess, was the fertile cause of more prodigies of valour in the cause of national redemption and independence than could even be effected by her continued and uninjured existence. That the sense of national insult in her violated person quickened the lethargic spirit with which many who were called to engage in the general revolt against England appeared at first to be affected, while calculating on the chances of war, in which they had so often been sufferers. Her tale once borne upon the wings of rumour, till heard and known to all, served to fire the heart,

\* Doomster is the Scotch term for the executioner or hangman.



insinew the arm, and give weight and edge to the steel of the newly roused patriot, as "Gwenllian's wrongs" became the incitement to arms, and the battle-cry when the struggle at length commenced.

Prince Griffith ab Rees succeeded to the utmost of his most sanguine expectation, in the noble reception which was accorded to him and his son at the court of North Wales; and the affectionate interest taken in his fortunes, by the patriarchal old king, Griffith ab Kunnan, and his venerable queen Angharad, was truly gratifying, and surpassed his most favourable anticipations. With Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader, their two noble sons, he had ever been as a brother, and the cordiality with which they received him and met his aspiring views, may be conceived, from the frank and ardent character which ever distinguished these martial and accomplished princes, and their known hostility to that power which had aimed to crush him, and still opposed his rightful claim to the crown of South Wales. The intercourse which fortune had thus afforded them with the illustrious husband of their beloved sister, the particulars of whose fate had been so long unknown to the family, may be conceived to be as delightful to them as to himself. His affecting narrative of the events connected with the dark cloud of adverse fate which had so long supplanted the sunshine of his early prosperity, could not but engage their deepest sympathy. The impassioned outpouring of his warm-hearted praise which he rendered their sister, as he described the faithfulness with which she adhered to his broken fortunes, in all his reverses and perils, and the noble manner in which she fulfilled the duties of a wife and mother, under circumstances the most distressing and discouraging, served to rivet in closer hold the manly brotherhood already existing between them; while their desire to embrace again their long-lost sister, and lead her to the arms of her ancient parents, and restate in her hearing the eulogies of her husband, became a desire of unquenchable anxiety. What he had narrated to the brothers he had to repeat to the parents, till the good old people were overwhelmed with their emotions, and the vehement desire to see her face once more before they died; and a

the length and breadth of the principalities of North and South Wales and Powys, became agitated with the popular fervour; and instead of hanging back, reluctant to engage in the cause and rendering personal service, as might be the case where the motives of a war appeared obscure, or interesting only to particular districts, all, all, were fired with enthusiastic fury against the atrocious perpetrators of their deeply-felt calamitous wrong, and national insult.

As soon as Griffith ab Rees and his two brothers-in-law arrived in South Wales, several chieftains who sympathised in their family calamity and concurred in the revolt, joined them with their powers, and thus additionally reinforced, they at once commenced hostilities. To avoid the imputation of exaggerating the wonderful amount of success which attended the arms of these avengers of Gwenllian we shall transcribe the historian Warrington's account of these transactions. Treating of the decapitation of the princess, he says:—"*an action so savage, without precedent, even in these times, called loudly for vengeance on the spirit of the injured princes.*"\*—Meaning the two brothers of Gwenllian, Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader.

"In this state of things the province of Cardigan was furiously attacked by the two sons of the king of North Wales. Among a people whose manners seem to have been little refined by ideas of chivalry, we are surprised at the appearance of two men, whose personal qualities, and whose courteous and gentle demeanour, might have entitled them to dispute the palm with the accomplished knights of the feudal ages. These distinguished persons were the above-named sons of Griffith ab Kunnan. As soon as the princes arrived in South Wales, several of the chieftains joined the army: being thus reinforced, they took and destroyed the castles of Aberystwith, Dinerth, and Caerwedross, and two

\* Warrington derives his authority from what he has stated respecting the death of Gwenllian, and the retaliating vengeance which followed from Giraldus Cambrensis's Itinerary—Lib. I., Cap. IX., and also Dr. Powell's Notes on the said chapter. This circumstance clearly contradicts the assertion of Florentius, Monk of Westminster, that Gwenllian, wife to Griffith ab Rees, by deceitful practices had been the cause of his death.—See *Welsh Chron.* p. 190.

other fortresses belonging to Walter Aspec and Richard de la Mere; making altogether five well garrisoned castles of immense strength and complete military appointments. Having finished the campaign so much to their glory, they returned into North Wales."

The excessive spirit of resentment by which the Welsh were animated at this time may be conceived from the following continuation of Warrington's remarks. "During the late expedition two English barons were slain. A little time after, in revenge, it is probable, of the late devastations, Ranulph, earl of Chester made an inroad into Wales, but being on a sudden intercepted by the Welsh, *it was with difficulty that he himself, with five only of his soldiers were able to escape; the rest of his forces having been put to the sword.*

On the close of the year 1136, the young princes, Owen Gwyneth and Cadwalader came a second time into South Wales, at the head of a formidable force, consisting of six thousand infantry, and two thousand horse, all of which were clad in armour and completely armed. The prosperous events of the late campaign, with the desire of revenge (for the murder of Gwenllian) having excited Griffith ab Rees, and several chieftains in South Wales to join them, with considerable supplies, they subdued the whole country, as far as Cardigan, expelling the foreigners, and replacing the native inhabitants. To repel this formidable insurrection, Ranulph, earl of Chester, again entered Wales, accompanied with the united forces of the Normans, Flemings, and the English remaining in Wales, or in the marshes, under the conduct of several powerful barons, all of whom were determined by one great effort to recover the territories lately torn from them, or at least to preserve those parts which still remained. *The courage of the Welsh had in various situations, been terrible to their enemies: on this occasion it seems to have been raised above the usual standard; fired with resentment at the late outrage (the decapitation of Gwenllian) and animated by the example of leaders whose talents rendered them so fit for command.* The English, after a severe and bloody conflict,

were defeated with the loss of three thousand men; and flying to their castles for safety, were so closely pursued, that many prisoners were taken, and great numbers drowned in the Teivy; a bridge across that river immediately under the castle having been broken down over which they were obliged to pass. *Never before had the English, in the various attempts upon Wales received so terrible a blow;*\* their army having been completely annihilated. Having finished another prosperous campaign, the two young princes returned into North Wales; carrying with them, to grace their triumph, the horses and armour, and the rich spoils they had taken.

These were the last battles in which the heroic Griffith ab Rees was engaged. In the year 1137, although a younger man than either of his brothers-in-law, Owen Gwyneth or Cadwalader, he paid the debt of nature; broken down by his immense labours in the numerous battles in which he had been engaged, while his health was undermined with grief for the death of his excellent wife and the faithful partner of his troubled life, as well as of his unhappy son. The death of this gallant prince became one of the most calamitous visitations of these times. Warrington states, "the power of the confederacy (for the recovery of Cambrian independence) was much weakend by the death of Griffith the son of Rees ab Tudor; who closing with his life a series of brilliant actions, reflected back the honours of a long line of illustrious ancestry."

In the same year this valiant and lamented prince was followed to the grave by his aged and illustrious father-in-law, the venerable Griffith ab Kunnan, sovereign of North Wales.

We shall conclude this memoir with another reference to the misrepresentation of a Monkish writer respecting the illustrious lady we have here commemorated. Florence of

\* Halle and other authors have stated that so thoroughly crushed and enfeebled by defeat after their long and hard fighting, were the English survivors of this battle that even the Welsh women took an immense number of them prisoners, and guarded them effectively as such, in the rear of their own fighting squadrons.



Worcester mentions that Griffith ab Rees died in consequence of "the deceitful practices of his wife." In that case Gwenllian must have been a very wonderful woman indeed: as her death took place two years before her lord's decease, her headless trunk must have risen from its resting place, to indulge itself in the unnamed "deceitful practices," which, according to this statement brought a husband whom she loved, honoured, obeyed, aided, and died for, to a premature grave. But to reconcile contradictions and impossibilities like these form no portion of the functions of a monastic chronicler; and rationality may yield what entertainment it pleases to such statements, except the inexcusable one of giving them the least credence or weight in forming its final conclusions.\*

\* The principal incidents in the memoirs of Gwenllian which were not gleaned from the Welsh Chronicles, the Saxon Chronicles, Warrington's and Powell's Histories of Wales, and other authorities therein named, were derived from the "Manuscript Notes" to Caradoc of Llancarvon's black letter history of Wales, referred to in the preface to this volume.



#### GENERAL NOTES TO GWENLLIAN, WIFE OF GRIFFITH AB REES.

In the course of this memoir we have treated of the restoration, by Griffith ab Rees, of the ancient Bardic Congress called the *Eisteddfod*; an institution peculiarly national, and truly dear to the Cymry of olden times. Those who, like ourselves, desire the revival and perpetuation of these interesting literary and musical meetings, would do well to notice that this *Eisteddfod*, which took place in the year 1135, deviated much in the nature of its transactions from those of more ancient times—and also from those which subsequently occurred, during the sway of our later native princes. We would infer that in these deviations from each other consisted their usefulness and beauty. Although varying from each other from the difference in the business transacted, they were the more perfectly consistent with propriety, inasmuch that *they severally reflected the peculiar tastes, feelings, and peculiarities of their respective epochs*. Therefore I would argue that our modern *Eisteddfod*, to emulate the examples set by the patrons, members, and conductors of the ancient institutions, instead of servilely copying any particular *Eisteddfod*, in the mode of its celebration, or the subjects embraced, should imitate them only in doing all things in accordance with the spirit of the age in which they are introduced:—namely the enlightened period in which we now enjoy our existence.

Those persons who peer no deeper than the surface of these matters may discover an anomaly in allowing any portion of the *Eisteddfod* compositions to be in the English language: but since English is the tongue which is spoken and understood by a large majority of the population of Wales, and those who speak, and understand, and prefer Welsh exclusively, are numerically but a very insignificant minority, common sense, common justice, and the spirit of the age demand that a considerable portion of the *Eisteddfod* entertainments should be in the English language. As the English-speaking people are those who contribute the greater amount towards the expenses of these celebrations, it constitutes a further claim; and surely those who pay so handsomely, in the form of rewards to the various successful competitors, have a right to dictate the subjects of the compositions, whether essays, songs, or poems; and also to decide on the language in which they should be respectively composed.

Those unreasonable, exclusive, and intemperate persons who manifest such repugnance to the dominant language of Great Britain, and insist on the propriety of every literary production competed for being only in the antiquated language of the principality of Wales, deserve to be stigmatized as the bigots and fanatics of Welsh nationality; who, like others of those narrow-minded classes, if their whims, fads, and fancies are permitted to carry undue sway, are the very instruments who carry within themselves the destructive principle that sooner or later will destroy (*Eisteddfodically* speaking) their faith, creed, and ultimately the *Eisteddfod* itself.

"But why" exclaim these pragmatic worthies (one of whom in a late letter published in the *Star of Gwent* Newspaper, signed John Jones, embracing these denounced views;) "why call it an *Eisteddfod* at all, if the English language is to form one of its features? *Eisteddfod* is a Welsh word signifying a congress or meeting of bards and minstrels; and therefore the tongue of the Saxon should be entirely excluded from our ancient British bardic associations bearing this national designation."

Our good, hot-headed friend, we have too great a sympathy with your malady to quarrel with you, but we will venture to answer your question as to the propriety of the Welsh term, *Elstoddvod*, being used to designate a meeting where English-speaking people take a share in its transactions. We admit, as you say, that such an assemblage signifies a meeting or congress of Welsh bards and minstrels; but as before observed, as the greater number of the inhabitants of Wales have found it their interest to cultivate the dominant language of this island to the exclusion of that spoken by their forefathers in less civilized times, being now the only vocal intermedium in transacting their business with the world—and deeming perhaps that it is better to speak good English than bad Welsh (for sadly degenerated the Welsh of South Wales is admitted to be); we cannot admit that by their change of tongue they have forfeited one iota of their rights of citizenship, but, moreover, that as those who speak and compose their productions in English, write entirely on subjects connected with Welsh nationality—the bards and minstrels of the latter description being as true Cambrian patriots as the former—have thoroughly as just a claim to be heard, encouraged, and rewarded, when successful, as any competitor who may be conversant only with the Welsh language, in the business and under the cognomen of the *Elstoddvod*.

Happily the English writers of Wales, however opposed by the sticklers for the supremacy of the Welsh language, have met with due encouragement these many years past, and goodly fruit have they borne in the respective forms of learned and interesting essays, in which the long neglected antiquities of Wales have undergone the most profound researches and critical examinations; while in the metrical department the poems and songs of the late Mrs. Hemans, John Humphry Parry, and others, whose productions are entirely founded on the traditions and historic remains of Cambria, yield the fairest answers to all inquiries under those headings. And be it further observed, there is decidedly more Welsh nationality in an English production, when vigorously embracing a subject, historic or traditional, that is purely Cambrian, than in a composition in the Welsh language on affairs that are in no respect connected with Wales or Welshmen. Thus in reality, such English writers, after all cavilling, are by far the best supporters of Welsh literature.

Having referred to the elegant and spirited poems and songs of the renowned Felicia Hemans, on Cambrian subjects, as masterpieces of their kind, we take leave to observe, that among the best writings of Welshmen, in their own vernacular tongue, it is our firm belief that there exists not a single composition that can bear comparison with that gifted lady's most descriptive poem entitled "*THE MEETING OF THE BARDS*." It was written expressly for the opening of an *Elstoddvod*; and appropriately affords an explanatory apology for the modern mode of holding such meetings within roofed edifices, as contra-distinguished from the ancient manner of celebrating them in the open air, amidst the sublimities of nature. With various views we insert that poem for the examination of our readers.

### THE MEETING OF THE BARDS.

BY FELICIA HEMANS.

Where met the bards of old? the glorious throng,  
They of the mountain and the battle song?  
They met—Oh not in kingly hall or tower,  
But where wild nature girt herself with power!

They met where streams dash'd bright from rocky caves;  
 They met where woods made moan o'er warrior's graves,  
 And where the torrent's rainbow-spray was cast,  
 And where dark lakes were heaving to the blast,  
 And midst th' eternal cliffs, whose strength defied  
 The crested Roman in his hour of pride:  
 And where the Carnedd, on its lonely hill,  
 Bore silent record of the mighty still,  
 And where the Druid's ancient Cromlech frown'd,  
 And the Oaks breathed mysterious murmurs round,  
 They throng'd, th' inspired of Yore! on plain or height,  
 "In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light!"  
 And baring unto heaven each noble head  
 Stood, in the circle where none else might tread.  
 Well might their lays be lofty!—soaring thought,  
 From Nature's presence tenfold grandeur caught!  
 Well might bold Freedom's soul pervade their strains,  
 Which startled eagles from their lone domains!  
 Whence came the echoes to those numbers high?  
 'Twas from the battle-fields of days gone by!  
 And from the tombs of heroes gone to rest,  
 With their good swords beneath the mountain's breast;  
 And from the watch-towers on the heights of snow,  
 Sever'd by cloud and storm from all below;  
 And the turf mounds, once girt with ruddy spears,  
 And the rock altars of departed years!  
 Thence deeply mingled with the torrent's roar,  
 The winds a thousand wild responses bore,  
 And the green land, whose every vale and glen,  
 Doth shrine the memory of heroic men,  
 On all her hills, awakening to rejoice,  
 Sent forth proud answers to her children's voice.  
 For us—not ours the festival to hold,  
 Midst the stone altars hallow'd thus of old;  
 Not when great Nature's majesty and might  
 First broke, all glorious, on our wondering sight,  
 Not near the tombs where sleep our free and brave,  
 Not by the mountain llyn, the ocean wave,  
 In these late days we meet:—dark Mona's shore,  
 Eryri's cliffs, resound with harps no more.  
 But, as the stream—(though time or art may turn  
 The current bursting from its cavern'd urn,  
 To bathe soft vales of pastures and of flowers,  
 From alpine glens and awful forest bowers,)  
 Alike in rushing strength, or sunny sleep,  
 Holds on its course to mingle with the deep:  
 Thus, though our paths be chang'd, still warm and free,  
 Land of the Bard! our spirit flies to thee;  
 To thee our thoughts, our hopes, our hearts, belong,  
 Our dreams are haunted by the voice of song!

Nor yield our souls one patriot feeling less  
To the green memory of thy loveliness,  
Than theirs, whose harp-notes peal'd on every height,  
In the sun's face, beneath the eye of light.

It is with great pleasure we have noticed among the young Cambrians of our time a growing taste for oratorical declamation. It would be wise to encourage this; as nothing can more effectually tend to a graceful change from the awkward rustic demeanour and style in which many, young and old, of our Eisteddvodd prize winners recite their performances or address their audience. With such laudable views it would be well of the patrons of Eisteddvodau to offer occasionally a fair prize for the best delivery from the platform, of Mrs Heman's poem the "MEETING OF THE SARDS," in the absence of an original composition.

## GWENLLIAN,

DAUGHTER OF OWEN GLENDOWER.

GWENLLIAN, natural daughter of Owen Glendower, as noticed elsewhere in this work became the wife of Philip ab Rhys, of Cenarth. The poet Lewis of Glyncothi wrote an affecting elegy on her death, in which after dwelling minutely on her personal charms he styles her "Gwenllian of the golden lock," and "Gwenllian of the hue of drifted snow;" and bears high testimony to her benevolent attention to the wants of the poor. He feelingly refers to the past fortunes of her illustrious father;—that he was once a powerful prince, with forty dukes for his allies, and the whole of Wales under his command. And that in his old age his benevolence was exemplified by the liberal support he gave to sixty-two female pensioners. The bard next mentions Gwenllian's two sons, and again eulogises her liberality, and that of her generous husband. Recalling to mind the many kind friends he had lost—the departure of "the old familiar faces"—he thus emphatically closes.

"Had I a tongue of steel, and lungs of brass, and were I able to lament them unceasingly, my eulogies would be too weak, too insufficient, for their great merits."



## GWENLLIAN, OF LLWYN TREN.

THIS excellent young lady was the daughter of a chieftain named Rhys ab David ab Thomas, of the two mansions of Vlaen Tren, and Llwyn Tren, on the river Tren in Carmarthenshire. Of the latter, and its hospitality the poet Lewis of Glyncothi speaks in the most animated terms; and in his poem addressed to its owner, the bard asks what land was there in christendom which could boast of richer wine than what is drank at Llwyn Tren? what country could boast of superior timber to that which grows on Rees ab David's land? His extensive grounds, he says, abound like Windsor forest, in oaks of the most luxuriant growth, as well as in other trees of every kind and magnitude. And to animate the scene, wild bees are found in swarms on his estate and are seen sipping many a flower. There also is seen the stately stag, in company with his comrades,—whilst the melodious blackbird is heard to commingle his notes with those of other songsters of the forest. The heron nestles there, and there it summers. And the timid squirrel, the beauty of the wood, gambols in safety there, and there it winters."

The fairy of the scene, the beautiful enchantress of this earthly paradise was Gwenllian, who, it appears, was as good as she was beautiful, for she is greatly celebrated by this poet for the benevolence of her character. In another poem addressed to her father, he says, "as the oak stands foremost among the trees of the forest, so does Rhys among his neighbours. He is the generous one of the line of Meredith Vras.† May the blessed Mary protect both him and his family; for when I was seized and laid up with a violent fever, and when shooting pains ran throughout all my bones,

\* The translation of the Rev. John Jones, vicar of Nevin, Pembrokeshire.

† The translation of this name gives it a comic tendency in English. which it does not bear in the original; Meredydd Vras, signifies Meredith the fat, or the portly.

the kindhearted Gwenllian, the daughter of Rhys, she who ever contributes to the relief of the hundred poor, supplied me with medicines, whose healing virtue restored me to my wonted health. There were no delicacies of the table with which I was not furnished, and I was moreover supplied with the very best mead.\* May my blessing ever attend her, and may my prayers in her behalf be heard! I was on the brink of the grave, but I am now restored to health and vigour."

The generous Gwenllian, however, was not destined to continue her career of benevolence; she was cut off like a frost-nipped flower, in early life; and, as we are informed by the same poet, on the eve of her marriage. He wrote a pathetic elegy on her death, with the following slight sketch of which, from Mr. Jones's translation, we shall conclude this brief memoir.

"A star hath set—the beautiful Enid† of Blaen-Tren, the virgin daughter of Rees is no more! her spirit hath flown to the happy regions above; and at Llan y Buthair‡ her corse hath been consigned to the grave. How brittle is the thread of life—less lasting than the spray of the sea. Alas! that Gwenllian should have been cut off with the month of May. Like that month, pleasant and sweet was the life of Gwenllian. Would that her life had been prolonged! but I am far advanced in the vale of years, and my muse gives utterance to nothing but woe, for the setting sun of Gilvach-Wen. Yesterday Gwenllian's voice was heard, but to day it is hushed. She was amiable in her life, and accomplished withal; and her hand was ever open to relieve the distressed. A branch of an ancient and noble stock hath been cut off. Ah! how uncertain is life! she was espoused, and on the eve of marriage; but before the bridal day her spirit fled, and her body rested in the silent tomb."

\* Mead, or Metheglyn, was the wine of the ancient Welsh. It was made of malt, water, herbs, and spices, and fermented with barm.

† Enid, to whom Gwenllian is compared, was one of the three exalted ladies of the court of King Arthur, according to the Welsh Triads.

‡ In Welsh Llan y Byddair

## THE LADY GWENLLIAN,

DAUGHTER OF CUNNAN AB MEREDITH, AND WIFE OF SIR  
GRIFFITH LLWYD.

ALTHOUGH Sir Griffith Llwyd, who in after years became the husband of this lady, was a very noted character, for the parts which he enacted in the political drama of his time, we know but little of Gwenllian herself, except what we learn from a curious Welsh poem addressed to her by a rejected lover, previous to her union with that celebrated chieftain. The poem, the poet, and the lady, are thus referred to by the late Dr. Owen Pughe, in a letter to Mr. Coxe, author of the *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire*, and, with the original Welsh, inserted in that work.

"There was a celebrated poet of Gwent, named Casnodyn, who flourished in the commencement of the fourteenth century, and whose works may be deemed the last of the ancient classics of Siluria.\* I have selected the following ode, chiefly for its brevity, and accompanied it with a literal translation; it is addressed to a lady called Gwenllian, the meaning of which name is, *one that is white as the torrent's foam*.†

"Transcendant in virtue, whose soft skin of gossamer delicacy is of the hue of the purely white spraying foam of the waves! Thy fame has been the subject of my lay, Gwenllian, sprightly and fair; a thousand more will sing in thy praise.

\* Casnodyn flourished from about 1290 to 1340. There are five pieces of his preserved in the *Myvyrian Archæology*, which contain abundant proofs of his poetic genius. 1—The poem to Gwenllian, herein cited. 2—Awdl i Ievan Abad Aberconwy. 3—Awdl i Ievan ab Gruffuth. 4—Awdl Marwnad Madawg. 5—Awdl i'r Drindod."—*Williams's Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen*.

† Most Welshmen will dissent from the doctor's opinion respecting the meaning of this name; "*white as the ocean's foam*," is merely a simile for a beautiful fair girl. For a brief dissertation on the meaning of "*Gwenllian*," see the memoir of Gwenllian, heiress of the vale of Clewyd, in this work.



"Though I anxiously seek the object of my wish, not a glance of the angel-presence, high-towering in renown, shall I have in a day, nor in twelve; my craving hope, like the gairish thistle-down, privileged with wings floats in an airy course of wide extended light.

"Passion has been a sting wounding to punish weakness: a token without fulfilment, lightly passes away on the sleep-obstructing form, so sprightly, seeming as a white stream of the rock, when the impending surge throws a mantle over the stone.

"Discreet of word and faultless! Oh! banish the wavering sentiment; I am ever without an assignation for the longed intercourse; fine gold (alone) has been my recompence, for the pain, the torment of delay, which my hands received with diffident wistfulness, from a second Indeg.\*

"Beauteous daughter of Kunnan! (Cynan) dispense the hundred gifts of the Eagle of the land of men—of heroes free from Saxon speech! A prospering lord, like a liberal Grecian sage, eloquent and energetic—release from chains a comely chief!

"I am master of the lucid words of the modest Gwyneddian language;† I am competent to celebrate the progeny of a prince of bounteous gift; far distant will fame be wafted by the power of words; so unrestrained my muse in Gwentian song.

"The slender and elegant damsel, from whose lips the Welsh so purely flows; the kind sleep-depriving maid, causing health-depriving anguish, a myriad will praise her without ceasing, in undebased words, soft and pure, which in recital shall greatly bless the course of life.

"May then the panegyric lay make impression on her, who is of the hue of the hoarsely-clamouring wave of Manaw, azure mantled and of sullen din, which often to

\* Indeg, the daughter of Avarwy, a celebrated beauty in the court of King Arthur, recorded in the Triads as one of the three chaste damsels of the Isle of Britain.

† Gwyneddian, i.e. the language of North Wales; this poet, being a native of Gwent, Monmouthshire, boasts an equal facility in composition in both languages.

where the bright green smiles, wafts me on a mighty course,  
gloomy and severe.

"Hastening to view how glorious the path of the luminary of Arvon, causing anxieties to the mind; the queen of the stone-built castle, the far-famed ample place of resort to a splendid throne; the slender and gentle maid of Dinorweg."\*

However beautiful these strains of Casnodyn may have been to others, it appears they utterly failed to move the heart of Gwenllian. As before observed she was afterwards united in marriage to Griffith Llwyd, grandson of the renowned Ednyved Vychan, the counsellor and general of Prince Llewellyn ab Iorwerth, who, as the representative of that great family resided at the mansion of Tregarnedd, to which he brought home his bride, the beautiful Gwenllian, who was thenceforward to become its mistress.

Of the lady we have no further notice in history; but the career of her husband was singularly eventful. Living at the period of the subjugation of Wales by Edward I., although the most ardent of patriots, he had the sagacity to perceive the futility of the unequal contest between the vast armies of the invader and the reduced number of his countrymen; therefore, conceiving that the best mode of settling the peace of the country, and to restore security to the disturbed homes of all, would be to submit quietly to English dominion, he strenuously advised the Welsh to refrain for the future from unavailing opposition. As a proof of the integrity of his political views, he kept aloof and refrained from taking any part in the insurrection raised by his immediate neighbours, the men of North Wales, who

\* Such is the mere sense of this curious Welsh poem; but the charm of the composition is principally to be found in the felicitous turns of a very intricate measure, adorned both with rhyme and alliteration. The translator remarks on it:—"This ode is so extremely complicated and artful in its construction, that it would be a fruitless attempt, I believe, to imitate it in any other language. Every line ends in *eg*, but they are all unaccented syllables except four, and consequently have not the jingle of full rhyme; they are also overpowered by the accented concatenation of other sounds (alliteration), in different parts of the verses, in such a manner that an incorrect ear might almost miss their existence in the composition.



having set up Madoc, a natural son of the late Llewellyn ab Griffith, for their prince, made a daring attempt to recover their lost liberties. Their final battle was fought in 1294, on Mynydd Digoll,\* in which, after a well-fought and long-contested engagement with the collected powers of the Lords Marchers, as foreseen by Griffith Llwyd, they were utterly overthrown and routed.

As a further proof of his pacific disposition towards the English government, and the new order of things in Wales, he voluntarily undertook to be the bearer to King Edward of the intelligence that his queen had given birth to a son, in the castle of Carnarvon. For this service he received the honour of knighthood at the hand of the English sovereign; the lordship of Powys was also bestowed on him, for which he did homage at Chester, in 1355, to Edward, prince of Wales, by the title of lord of Poole; according to Pennant his title was also Frenchified into De la Pole.

But Sir Griffith Llwyd, notwithstanding these rewards for his adherence to English politics, lived to repent his complaisance. The galling oppression endured by his countrymen, and the unbearable insolence of the English nobility and others in authority towards the most excellent and high-born of the land, at length drove the Welsh to desperation and resistance. Griffith Llwyd partaking of their indignant feelings and determination, to make amends for his former advice, now took measures for a revolt for the recovery of their ancient freedom.

"Between the years 1316 and 1318 he attempted to form an alliance with Edward Bruce (brother of Robert Bruce of Scotland), the short-lived king of Ireland. Letters passed between them but without effect. At length, from the greatness of his spirit, he determined alone to endeavour to free his country from the slavery to which he himself had probably contributed."†

\* "The name of this place," says Pennant, "is taken from an immense Carnedd (In English Carn), or heap of stones, surrounded with great upright stones, in an adjacent field.

† Pennant. The following is that author's account of the fortification of the house of Sir Griffith Llwyd. "I find that he had fortified Tregarnedd with a

In the year 1322 he took up arms, and headed the insurrectionary powers of Wales. To mark the spirit of desperation to which they were driven, he caused his banners to be inscribed with those burning words, which strikingly express the exasperated feelings of the times, *Gwell marw vel dyn na bio vel y ci*, signifying, "Better die like a man than live like a dog."

For awhile success attended his arms wherever he moved; but at length superior powers came against him, and ultimately he and his army were subdued and taken prisoners. Pennant suggests he "doubtlessly underwent the fate of our gallant insurgents;" in which case he was either shot or beheaded. But other writers imagine that he was kept in captivity till his death, in the Tower of London. What became of the Lady Gwenllian and his family, is unknown, having found no record in history, except what is thus stated by Pennant from the Sebright MSS. "His daughter Morvydd, one of his co-heiresses, conveyed by marriage this estate (Tregarnedd), being her portion, to Madoc Gloddaeth, which followed the succession of that House till 1750, when it was alienated by the late Sir Thomas Mostyn to Mr. Owen Williams."

very strong foss and rampart, and made another stronghold about three quarters of a mile distant, in the morass of Malltraeth called Ynis Cevenni, which he insulated with the waters of the river Cevni: both are still remaining. The foss is nearly perfect, and near four yards deep and eight wide.

## GWERVIL HAEL OF ABERTANED.

GWERVIL Hael (Gwervil the Generous), was a lady of rank in the fourteenth century. In the olden times of good house-keeping she became the model of a great patroness to the fame-bestowing minstrels of her day, and obtained from the gratitude and general suffrage of the bards the above flattering title. She was the daughter of Madoe of Abertaned; and the wife of Rhys ab David ab Howel, by whom she became the mother of several children, who ultimately were allied to some of the most respectable Houses in the principality, and the founders of great families. Among those alliances may be named the Salusburys of Reeg (Rûg) and Llewenny; Pugh of Mathavarn, in Montgomeryshire; Pryse Pryse, of Gogerddan, in the county of Cardigan; and ultimately of Sir Watkin William Wynne, of Wynnstay.\* Reeg (Rûg) and its dependencies was devised by will to Colonel Salusbury of the Guards; and he dying unmarried in Sicily, during the late continental war, bequeathed the whole to his younger brother, Griffith Howel Vaughan, Esq., the present highly respectable and hospitable proprietor.† Gwervil Hael's descendants by her second husband were equally illustrious, and are traceable to our present time. They were the Tanats of Abertanad.‡ The Godolphins came into possession by marriage; and a Lord Godolphin devised the whole estate to Lord Osborne, in which family it still continues. To this branch of the descendants of Gwervil Hael may be added Mrs. Ormsby Gore, of Porlington, near Oswestry.

\* The residence of Gwervil Hael was Llanyblodwell Hall, Montgomeryshire, North Wales, near the mansion of Sir Watkin William Wynne.

† Vide notes to the poems of Lewis Glyncoth, edited by the Rev. John Jones, vicar of Nevyn.

‡ The Tanats of Abertanad took their name from the river Tanad, which runs through their original estate, and falls into the Yrnyw, near their seat of Abertaned.

HAVING said thus much of her descendants, we now return again to the fountain of their honours, the liberal Gwervil Hael. Brief, however, are our remaining records. She became the enviable subject of the poetic eulogies of the bard Lewis of Glyncothi. At her decease he wrote on her a fine elegy, in which he describes the general lamentation that followed the mournful event, not only among the minstrels, but also throughout the country generally. In the fervour of his admiration he declares, that such was the excellence of her high character that she was deserving of being canonized, and of pious pilgrimages being made to the hallowed spot that enshrined her remains.

In the song entitled "The Ladies of Cymru," this "fair daughter of Madoc of Abertaned, the light and glory of the festal hall," is thus apostrophized:—

"To Gwervil the gen'rous what bard can refrain  
From chaunting dear Gratitude's warm-hearted strain?  
Blest bountiful beauty, the fountress of feasts,  
The darling of chieftains, bards, minstrels, and priests,"

## GWERVIL,

WIFE OF DAVID LLOYD AB LLEWELLYN LORD OF MATHAVARN.

THE husband of this lady, David Lloyd ab Llewelyn, was a man of no inconsiderable note in his time, both for the gifts of fortune, and the supposed possession of an enlightened mind. He is reputed to have been a poet, herald, antiquary, and *Brudiwr*, or prophet, of no mean attainments. His residence was on his own property, a good house at Mathavarn, in the parish of Llanwrin, Cyveiliog, Montgomeryshire; and his fair estate extending along both sides of the river Dyvi, or Dovey; consisting of hill and vale, pasture and cornfields, wood and turbary, as well as a certain quantum of mountain-sheep-walks, where he could breed and feed both his wool and his mutton.

Davydd seems to have caught the fire, or rather the smoke of his genius, from some of the fatidical seers, who emulated in a small way and at a great distance, the pythonic darkness which sublimate the inexplicable prophesies of Merddyn Wyllt; one of our Cambrian ancients who has thriven on his obscurities, and had the rare fortune to be admired most when least understood. Consequently, he became the oracle of that part of the country, where he dwelt; and if his enigmatical promulgations failed to enlighten his occasional auditors, they offended none, for the very convincing reason that few ever pretended to understand them. His own interpretations therefore became doubly acceptable; as no person could be found infidel enough to dispute with a prophet the meaning of his own prophesies.

But among David Lloyd ab Llewelyn's felicitous possessions, we have purposely omitted the chief—with the view of producing it effectively, in all its unique superiority, and unalloyed with baser matter—he had a wife;—a shrewd, clever, little wide-awake, sensible wife, of the pretty name



of Gwervil. Alas for the paucity of detail with the chroniclers of old! They very carefully announce in their annals some incidents which tend to make us blush for the barbarities of our forefathers; but rarely enliven their pages with the sayings and doings of the clever women of their day, or doubtless our volumes of female biography would be more extensive. We grieve to say, there is but one little record of the imputed brilliance of Gwervil, the wife of David Lloyd ab Llewelyn, but on the strength of that solitary passage in her life, history has given a niche for her statue:—on the evidence of that lonely instance of her wit and waggery, the readiness of which suggests such habitual occurrences, we must give her credit for many unproduceable good sayings and doings.

When the aspiring "Harry of Richmond," the gallant grandson of Owen Tudor, was on his way from Milford towards Shrewsbury and onwards, to fight the battle of Bosworth Field, and stake his life to win the royal crown of these realms, he felt an inclination to call at the goodly mansion of Mathavarn, and become for a night the guest of one whom he was well assured was not only a faithful, but a most active and industrious partizan. The industry of David Lloyd ab Llewelyn consisted in the fecundity and fervour of his prophecies, which latterly had been less oracular, or mystic than usual, and foretold that a grand crisis was at hand, when the result of a battle between a dragon and a wild boar, would place the crown of this island once more upon the head of a Briton. If some were simple enough to understand this literally, and to expect merely the exciting entertainment producible by a bona fide battle between two strange animals, like the legendary fight of the lion and the unicorn, of later coinage, others were not wanting in the necessary sagacity to the internal meaning of that oracular announcement. It has been said although the pretended prophecies of David Lloyd ab Llewelyn were subjected to the ridicule of the shrewder portion of his countrymen, yet that his dark, mysterious, but bold prophecies that a chieftain of Wales, of the British blood royal, should liberate the nation from Saxon bondage, so wrought

upon the valour and excited imagination of his countrymen, that thousands of Welshmen enlisted under the banners of Rhys ab Thomas, who received the Earl of Richmond at Milford. Therefore, to countenance so useful an instrument of his ambition, was no contemptible piece of policy in the "Briton Richmond;" living as he did, in an age when witchcraft was a burnable offence, and when lords and ladies of the highest rank were not too wise to avoid consulting "cunning men" and "prophetic women;" who in reality were not beyond the par of our modern fortune tellers.

After some hours spent in rest and refreshment at the house of David Lloyd, whom the Earl is said to have known familiarly in his childhood, previous to his retirement for the night, he asked his host, either in real anxiety for the issue of his enterprize, or in a spirit of jocular gaiety, his *real opinion*, whether success or failure would attend his banners. Taken by surprise the seer cautiously replied, that a question of such importance required due consideration, and that he should give his answer in the morning. When asked by his wife the cause of his apparent perplexity, he informed her of Richmond's demand, and his own hesitation in making an immediate reply. "How can you possibly find a difficulty about your answer said Gwervil; "tell him, without hesitation, that his daring enterprize will be most successful and glorious; if your prediction is verified, you will receive honors and rewards; but if it fails, and Richmond falls, *depend upon it he will never come here to reproach you.*

This saying gave rise to the saying *Cynghor Gwraig heb ei ofyn*; implying a wife's unasked advice is always fortunate.

Among the diarhebion or Proverbs of Catwg there is one especially applicable to our witty, heroine, which runs thus—

"Were a woman as quick on her feet as she is with her tongue, doubtless she would catch the lightning."

## MISTRESS ELEANOR GWYNN,

GENERALLY KNOWN AS "NELL GWYNN," MISTRESS OF KING  
CHARLES THE SECOND, AND MOTHER OF CHARLES BEAU-  
CLERC, THE FIRST DUKE OF ST. ALBANS.

ABBRIDGED FROM MRS. JAMESON'S "BEAUTIES OF THE COURT OF KING  
CHARLES THE SECOND."

As the authoress of the splendid and costly work from which we derive the memoirs of Nell Gwynn has not been so absurdly fastidious as either to exclude her from, or to make ridiculous apologies for, her introduction into "The Beauties of the Court of Charles the Second," we are happy to follow so fair an example. Trusting that the charm of contrast which she yields to our other "Heroines," will make this added feature of variety acceptable to our fair readers, we purpose that Mrs. Jameson shall tell her part alone, and the tale of this lowly Welsh beauty at the voluptuous court of the "merrie monarch."

"It is at least, in *one* sense, rather a delicate point to touch on the life of Nell Gwynn: one would fain be properly shocked, decorously grave, and becomingly moral; but as the lady says in *Comus*, "but to what end?" It were rather superfluous to set about proving that Nell Gwynn was, in her day, a good-for-nothing sort of person; in short, as wild a piece of frailty as ever wore a petticoat. In spite of such demonstrations, and Bishop Burnet's oburgations to boot, she will not the less continue to be the idol of popular tradition; her very name indicative of a smile, and of power to disarm the austerity of virtue, and discountenance the gravity of wisdom. It is worth while to enquire in what consists that strange fascination, which, after the lapse of a century and a half, still hangs round the memory of this singular woman. Why is her name still familiar and dear in the mouths of the people? Why hath no man condemned her? Why has satire spared her?



Why is there in her remembrance a charm so far beyond, and so different from, mere celebrity? Other women have become famous and interesting in spite of their lapses from virtue, and some from that very cause. Rosamond Clifford is the heroine of romance; Agnes Sorrel, of history and chivalry; Jane Shore, of tragedy; La Vallière, of sentiment and poetry; and Gabrielle d' Estrées has been immortalized by the love of a hero, to whom she was most faithless, and of whom she was not worthy. But Nell Gwynn—heaven knows had little to do with romance, or tragedy, or chivalry, or sentiment: and her connexion with the king, with all the scandal it gave rise to, would have made her, in other cases, a mark for popular hatred and scurrility, but for those redeeming qualities which “turned dispraise to praise,” and made

“Both faults and graces loved of more or less.”

A sprinkling of hypocrisy, or a few cooling drops of discretion, had rendered Nell Gwynn either far better or far worse, and placed her on a par with the women around her; as it was, she resembled nothing but herself. She may, perhaps, be compared in some few points with her fair and famed contemporary, Ninon de l' Enclos. Both had talents, wit, vivacity, and much goodness of heart; both were distinguished for the sincerity and permanency of their friendships, their extensive charity, and munificence to literary men; what Ninon was to Racine and Molière, Nell was to Dryden and Lee. But there is this difference, that Ninon, with all her advantages of birth, talents, independent fortune, and education, not only *soigne*, but learned, became from choice or perverted principle, what Nell, poor, uneducated, and unprotected, became from necessity or accident.

The family of Nell Gwynn was of Welsh extraction, as may be inferred from the name; her parents were natives of Hereford, of which city one of her noble descendants was afterwards bishop,\* and where, according to a local

\* This “descendant” was her grandson, Lord James Beauclerc, who died bishop of Hereford in 1782.

tradition, she was herself born.\* While yet a mere child, she was an attendant in a tavern, where the sweetness of her voice and her sprightly address recommended her to notice. She was afterwards, still in extreme youth, servant to a fruiterer, and in this capacity employed to sell oranges at the theatres. Here her beauty and vivacity attracted the notice of Lacy the comedian, her first lover, who was soon rivalled in her good graces by Hart, the handsomest man and the most accomplished actor of his day. Under the successive tuition of these two admirers, both of whom were masters of their art, Nell Gwynn was prepared for the stage, for which she had a natural *penchant*; and, in 1667, we find her enrolled in the king's company of comedians, who were then acting, under Killigrew's patent, at the new theatre in Drury-lane. Before the Restoration no woman had appeared upon the English stage, the female parts being all acted by men. The novelty and attraction of seeing beautiful women in such characters as Desdemona, Ophelia, Aspasia, &c., was, undoubtedly, one cause of that mania for theatrical amusements which was one of the characteristics of the time. Nell Gwynn at once became popular in her new vocation. She was so great a favourite, that the public endured and even applauded her, in characters for which her talents were altogether unfitted. She excelled in comedy, and in all parts in which singing and dancing were requisite. The character of Florimal, in the "Maiden Queen," appears to have been her *chef d'œuvre* in this style.† Her easy gracefulness of address, arch expression, and musical voice, rendered her unrivalled as a speaker of prologues and epilogues; several of Dryden's

\* According to Brailley and Britton's history of Hereford, Nell Gwynn was born in a humble dwelling in Pipe-lane, in the city of Hereford. Those county historians state that her grandson, the bishop, became the proprietor of that very episcopal palace which almost adjoined the humble cot where his maternal ancestor drew her first breath.

† Nell Gwynn appears to have excelled in precisely the same line of characters which, in our day, marked the peculiar forte of that fascinating actress Madame Vestris, in the early part of her theatrical career; while in the symmetry of form, petite foot and figure attributed to Nell, the resemblance appears also to hold good.



best, and it is well known he excelled in these productions, were written expressly for her. The same year that Nell Gwynn first appeared on the stage, she attracted the notice of the witty Lord Buckhurst (afterwards the Earl of Dorset), who took her from the theatre and allowed her 100*l* a year. The absence, however, was not long: she returned to the stage in 1668, and appeared in her great character of Almahide, in Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*. In spite of what Pepys says of her acting serious parts vilely (which was true in general), she produced a great effect in this character, as is evident from the extraordinary success of the play, and the allusion to her, long afterwards, by Lord Lansdown in his "Progress of Beauty":—

"And Almahide, once by kings adored."

The prologue to this tragedy was written for her by Dryden. It seems that Nokes, the favourite buffoon of the rival theatre (the Duke's House), had lately drawn crowds by appearing in a huge broad brimmed hat, though where the jest lay it is impossible to guess. Dryden ridiculed this extravagance, by causing Nell to appear in a hat double the size, with brims as wide as a cart wheel; her slight short figure, just visible under this vast overhanging circumference, and the archness with which she delivered the satirical address, were irresistibly droll, and produced all the effect expected; and much more, if the tradition be true, that it was in this grotesque costume Nell first captivated her royal lover: but there is reason to doubt it. All that can be ascertained is, that from this time the king more openly distinguished her, and after the first performance, went behind the scenes and took her away in his carriage to sup with him. Soon after Lord Buckhurst resigned her, for the consideration of an earldom and a pension.

After this elevation (as the contemporary writers express it, and no doubt very sincerely thought it), we find Nell dignified in the play bills with the title of "Madame Ellen," by which name she was popularly known. She appeared on the stage once or twice after the birth of her eldest son,

but retired from it altogether in 1671. About this time she was created one of the ladies of the queen's privy chamber, under which title she was lodged in Whitehall.\* Madame Ellen lost none of her popularity by her "elevation." She carried with her into the court the careless assurance of her stage manners: and, as Burnet says, "continued to *hang on* her clothes with the same slovenly negligence;" but she likewise carried there qualities even more rare in a court than coarse manners and negligent attire: the same frolic gaiety, the same ingenuous nature, and the same kind and cordial benevolence, which had rendered her adored among her comrades. Her wit was as natural and as peculiar to herself as the perfume to the flower. She seems to have been, as the Duchess de Chaulnes expressed it, "*femme d'esprit, par la grace de Dieu*:" her bon mots fell from her lips with such an unpremeditated felicity of expression, and her turn of humour was so perfectly original, that though it occasionally verged upon extravagance and vulgarity, even her maddest flights became her; "as if," says one of her contemporaries, "she alone had the patent from Heaven to engross all hearts." Burnet calls her "the wildest and indiscreetest creature that ever was in a court;" and speaking of the king's constant attachment to her, he adds, "but, after all, he never treated her with the *decencies* of a mistress." This last observation of the good bishop is certainly "twisted into a phrase of some obscurity:" the truth is, that Nell had a natural turn for goodness, which survived all her excesses: she was wild and extravagant, but not rapacious or selfish—frail, not vicious; she never meddled with politics, nor made herself the tool of ambitious courtiers. At the time that the king's mistresses were everywhere execrated for their avarice and arrogance, it was remarked that Nell Gwynn never asked anything for herself, never gave herself unbecoming airs, as if she deemed her unhappy situation a subject of pride; there is not a

\* Mrs. Jameson remarks, "This was too disgraceful, but the disgrace rests with Charles who offered, and the queen who endured the outrage, rather than upon poor Nell, who certainly never sought the dignity."

single instance of her using her influence over Charles for any unworthy purpose ; but, on the contrary, the presents which the king's love or bounty lavished upon her, she gave and spent freely ; and misfortune, deserved or undeserved, never approached her in vain. Once as she was driving up Ludgate-hill, she saw a poor clergyman in the hands of the sheriff's officers, and struck with compassion, she alighted from her carriage, inquired into the circumstances of his arrest, and paid his debt on the spot ; and finding on application to the vouchers he had named, that his character was as unexceptionable as his misfortunes were real, she generously befriended him and his family. The plan of that fine institution, Chelsea Hospital, would probably never have been completed, at least in the reign of Charles, but for the persevering and benevolent enthusiasm of this woman, who never let the king rest till it was carried into execution.

These, and many other instances of her kind nature endeared her to the populace. On one occasion, a superb service of plate, which had been ordered for the duchess of Portsmouth, was exhibited in a shop of a certain goldsmith, and the common people crowded round the window to gaze. On learning for whom it was intended, they broke out into execrations and abuse, wishing the silver melted and poured down her throat, and loudly exclaiming, that "it had been much better bestowed on madam Ellen."

Strange as it may seem, Nell piqued herself upon her orthodox principles and her reverence for the clergy,\* partly from a sincere religious feeling which had been early and unaccountably impressed on her mind, and never left her ; and partly perhaps, out of opposition to the papist favourite, the duchess of Portsmouth. Madame de Sevigné gives in one of her letters so piquant a description of Nell Gwynn and her merry impertinence to her rival, that instead of referring to the volume, I give the passage at length.

"Kéronalle," (the duchess of Portsmouth) "n'a été trompée

\* When Charles II. lodged at the house of Bishop Kenn at Winchester, the prelate refused to admit Nell Gwynn. The king put himself into a passion, but Nell defended the bishop and observed that he only did his duty, and retired voluntarily to another lodging.

sur rien. Elle avoit envie d'être la maîtresse du roi; elle l'est.....Elle a un fils qui vient d'être reconnu, et à qui on a donné deux duchés. Elle amasse des trésors et se fait aimer et respecter de qui elle pent; mais elle n'avoit pas prévu trouver en chemin, une jeune comédienne, dont le roi est ensercelé. Elle n'a pas le pouvoir de l'en détacher un moment. La comédienne est aussi fière que la Duchesse de Portsmouth: elle la morgue, lui dérobe souvent le roi, et se vante de ses préférences. Elle est jeune, folle, hardie, débauchée, et plaisante: elle chante, elle danse, et fait son métier de bonne foi: elle a un fils; elle veut qu'il soit reconnu. Voici son raisonnement; Cette demoiselle', dit-elle 'fait la personne dequalité. Elle dit, que tout est son parent en France. Dès qu'il meurt quelque grand, elle prend le deuil. Hé bien! puisqu' elle est de si grande qualite, pourquoi s'est elle faite.....? Elle devroit mourir de honte. Pour moi, c'est mon métier; je ne me pique pas d'autre chose. Le roi m'entretient je ne suis qu'à lui présentment. J'en ai un fils, je prétends qu'il doit être reconnu; et il le reconnoitra, car il m'aime autant que sa Portsmouth. " Cette créature," continues Madame de Sévigné, " tient le haut du pavé, et décontenance et embarrasse extraordinairement la Duchesse."

Besides her apartment in Whitehall, in quality of lady of the queen's privy chamber, Nell Gwynn had lodgings in Pall Mall,\* where she frequently entertained the king and a few of his chosen companions with *petits soupers* and select concerts. On one of these occasions, she had collected together some new and excellent performers, and the king was so much enchanted, that he expressed his approbation in strong terms. "Then sir," said Nell, holding out her hand, "to show that you do not speak merely as a courtier, let me have the pleasure of presenting these poor people with a gratuity from your majesty!" The king, feeling in his pocket, declared he had no money, and turning to the duke of York, asked him if he had any money? The duke

\* At the left hand corner of St. James's Square: the walls of the back room on the ground floor were (within memory) entirely of looking glass, as was said to have been the ceiling.—*Pennant's London*, p. 90.



replied, "no sir, I believe, not above a guinea or two." Nell, shaking her head with her *petit air malin*, and drolly mimicking the king's tone and habitual expression exclaimed "odds fish, what company have I got into here!"

Cibber who relates the anecdote, and lived about the same time, tells us that Nell was never known to be unfaithful to the king, from the moment he first noticed her, and that she was "as much distinguished for her personal attachment to him, as her rivals were by their titles and grandeur." Her disinterested affection, her sprightly humour, her inexhaustible powers of entertainment, and constant desire to please, must have formed an agreeable contrast to the rapacity, ill temper, affectation, and arrogant caprices of the other court ladies. Charles in spite of every attempt made to detach him from her, loved her to the last, and his last thought was for her:—"Let not poor Nelly starve!" was his appeal to his brother and successor James. Burnet, who records this dying speech, is piously scandalized that the king should have thought "of such a creature," in such a moment; but some will consider it with more mercy, as one among the few traits which redeem the sensual and worthless Charles from utter contempt.

After the king's death Nell Gwynn continued to reside in Pall Mall, where she lived on a small pension and some presents the king had made her. She survived him above seven years, conducting herself with the strictest decorum, and spending her time in devotion, and her small allowance in acts of beneficence:—she died in 1691. Dr. Tension, then vicar of St. Martin's, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, preached her funeral sermon, in which he enlarged upon her benevolent qualities, her sincere repentance, and exemplary end. When this was afterwards mentioned to Queen Mary, in the hope that it would injure him in her estimation, and be a bar to his preferment, "and what then?" answered she hastily; "I have heard as much: it is a sign that the poor unfortunate woman died penitent; for if I can read a man's heart through his looks, had she not made a pious and christian end, the doctor could never have been induced to speak well of her."



Nell Gwynn was possessed of little at her death, and that little was by her will distributed in charity. She left, among other bequests, a small sum yearly, to the ringers of the church of St. Martin, where she was buried, which donation they still enjoy.

She bore the king two sons, Charles and James Beauclerk. Charles, her eldest son, was born in Lincoln's Inn Fields,\* in 1670, a short time before his mother quitted the stage. Her youngest son, James, died in his childhood at Paris. The occasion of the eldest brother being titled and acknowledged, is too characteristic to be omitted. When the children of the duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth had been dignified with titles, orders, and offices, Nell Gwynn naturally felt piqued that *her* sons, whose filial claims upon his majesty, as the fountain of honour, were *at least*, as well founded, should be passed over, and she took her own whimsical method of hinting her wishes to the king. One day when his majesty was present, and her eldest son was playing in the room, she called to him aloud, in a petulant tone, "come here you little bastard!" The king, much shocked, reproved her; she replied meekly, and with the most demure simplicity, that "indeed she was sorry, but had no better name to give him, poor boy!" A few days afterwards, this nameless young gentleman was created baron of Heddington and earl of Burford, and in 1683, *duke of St. Albans*, registrar of the high court of chancery, and grand falconer of England. He inherited his mother's personal beauty, and served with great bravery under King William III.†

\* In our memoir of the Lady Nest, daughter of Prince Rhys ab Tewdwr and mistress of Henry I., we have noticed some coincidences of character between that libertine monarch and Charles II. Since writing that article and on transcribing the present one, it has become evident to us that Charles doubtless made Henry Beauclerk his model, his *beau idéal* of a kingly profligate, a royal man of pleasure. Hence, it would seem, his choice of the name of Beauclerk for his children by Nell Gwynn.

† This first duke of St. Albans married Lady Diana Vere, sole daughter of Aubrey de Vere, twentieth and last earl of Oxford, and the greatest heiress in rank and descent in the three kingdoms. She was very young at the period of her marriage, and as amiable and innocent as lovely. She became the mother of eight sons, of whom Lord Vere Beauclerk (ancestor of the present duke), was

## THE PRINCESS GWLADYS,

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF BRYCHAN BRECHEINIOG.

THE memoirs of the daughters of Brychan Brecheiniog, to prevent the necessity of repetition, should be read in connection with the life of Marchell, or Marcella, the mother of that ancient prince. In their matrimonial alliances these pious females were more remarkable for their union with good men, who favoured the propagation of christianity, than those who were merely the mighty of the earth.

"Gwladys,\* the eldest daughter of Brychan married Gwnlliw ad Glewissus, regulus of that part of ancient Gwent (Monmouthshire), which lies between the rivers Usk and Rhymni,† then called Glewissig. Capgrave tells us, "that Gunleus growing weary of the world, abdicated his government, and retired to a cell, where, living with singular austerity, he supported the remainder of his life by the labour of his hands." But John of Tinmouth, who calls him a king of the Southern Britons, says, "that after the death of his father, he being the eldest son, divided his kingdom into seven parts, six of which he gave his brethren, reserving to himself the other part, as well as the seigniorship of the whole." He was attended in his last moments by Dubricius, bishop of Llandaff, and died in the arms of his son Cadoc, or Cattwg, on the 29th of March, A.D. 500. The churches of Llangynllo in Radnorshire, Nantgynllo in Cardiganshire, and St.

\* This name is pronounced Gladdis; as none but very pedantic Welshmen would think of calling it Goo-la-dis. An English commercial traveller in North Wales noticing a cheerful looking child of that name, observed, "aye, a very proper name for you my dear, is Glad-eyes; for you have as pleasant a pair of peepers as ever were cased in a pretty face;—here's a penny for you Glad-eyes—good bye Glad-eyes!—well if ever I have a little girl of my own I should like to have her christened Glad-eyes—good bye Glad-eyes!" And off he strutted, leaving the poor child amazed, who, however, understood his present better than his compliments. We may add, this name, latinized, is Claudia.

† Vulgarized to Rumney and Rummy, in modern times.

Woolos, near Newport, in Monmouthshire, are consecrated to his memory; and Ystradgynlais (vale of Gunlais) in Breconshire, on the borders of Glamorganshire, is also supposed to have derived its name from him. He left issue by his wife Gwladys, Cadoc or Cattwg; Cynider; and Cammarch.

As Gwladys and her husband were especially honoured in their three sons, the following brief notices of them, from Jones's Breconshire, is as essential to their parents' celebrity as their own.

"Cammarch has his name perpetuated by the church of Llanganmarch, which was dedicated to him in the Eastern, or upper part of the Hundred of Builth, or Bualt, in the county of Brecon."

"Cynider, lived a solitary life, as a hermit in Glamorganshire. He is said to have been buried at Glazebury, in Radnorshire. The churches dedicated to him are Llangydider and Abereskir, in Breconshire. For the history of the miracles attributed to him in Roman Catholic times, the whimsical and pious legends of Capgrave must be consulted."

"Cadoc or Cattwg, the elder brother whom we purposely name last, was the most renowned of his brethren. He was educated under an Irish saint called Tathai, who had opened a celebrated school in Gwent, or Caerwent, the Venta Silurum of the Romans, and a portion of Monmouthshire in modern times. Having, agreeably to the law of Gavelkind, inherited part of his father's lands, he founded on his own portion the abbey of Llancarvan in Glamorganshire; which he governed, and in which he exercised an unreserved system of hospitality. Capgrave tells us, he daily sustained one hundred ecclesiastical persons, *as many widows*, and as many other poor people, besides those who visited him: for though he was an abbot and had many monks under his government, he very properly and very prudently, reserved a part of his father's principality, to be charitably distributed to such as were in need. He is said to have died in North Wales, about the year 570. All the churches bearing the name of Llangattock were dedicated to his memory. Not the least

among the honours of Cattwg, was that of having been the tutor of Taliesin, celebrated in ancient British lore as the "Penbeirdd," or chief of the bards. But what has tended most to perpetuate the celebrity of Cattwg is the collection of proverbs and maxims of the Britons bearing his name. He is supposed to be the author of some of these "Diarhebion Catwg," as they are called in Welsh; and the careful editor or collector of the rest. The English reader will find the best collection of them in the pages of that excellent, but now scarce periodical, the Cambro Briton.



## THE LADY GWLADYS DDU,

DAUGHTER OF PRINCE LLEWELYN AB IORWERTH, WIDOW OF  
REGINALD DE BREOS, AND WIFE OF SIR RALPH MORTIMER,  
ANCESTOR OF KING EDWARD IV.

GWLADYS DDU,\* was the eldest daughter of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, sovereign prince of North Wales, by his first wife Tangwystle; consequently she was the sister by the same mother also of the disinherited Prince Griffith ab Llewelyn, and sister-in-law to his amiable wife Sina, as related in the memoir of that lady.

As she lived in times when the most vigorous and incessant wars were carried on by England for the entire subjugation of her country, it is difficult to surmise, and impossible to account, at this distance of time, for her matrimonial position. At first sight it would appear, that with more prudence than patriotism, she quitted the losing, to unite herself to the winning side, in a political sense of the question; and evidently with the concurrence of her father.

She was married successively to two powerful Norman barons of great possessions in Wales, whose political alliance with her father, in his opposition to England, was perhaps stipulated for, in these marriage settlements, however ill attended to in after time. However, one suggestion is clear, in favour of the personal character of this lady—had she not shone in her sphere as the wife of the first, it is not probable she would be sought by a second husband of that nation.

Her first husband was Reginald de Breos, son of the unpopular William de Breos and his wife Maud de Haia.†

\* Ddu, pronounced *thee*, literally meaning Black Gwladys, otherwise dark complexioned Gwladys; there being no Welsh word for "Brunette," which would be the proper designation, although Wales abounds with that species of female beauty; which is more prevalent there than the "Blondes," or the radiantly fair.

† See her memoir in this work.



Reginald was at this time a widower, and considerably older than Gwladys, having been previously the husband of Groecia, daughter of William Bruere, lord of Bridge-water, by whom he had a daughter and two sons, named Mary, William,\* and John, all living at the time of his second marriage. As the wife of an elderly husband and stepmother to his children, there appears to have been little attraction for a young wife, of princely connections, like Gwladys; added to this, she must have felt a natural reluctance to unite her destiny to the representative of this unpopular family, abhorred as his father was in Wales, for his tyranny and cruelty while lord of Brecon and Abergavenny. The probability is, that Gwladys was of that gentle and docile turn of mind, that, submitting to the suggestions of her friends, and the commands of her father, she yielded to imperious necessity, and became a political victim for what was considered the good of her country.

Reginald de Breos had at this time succeeded to the rank and possessions of his father, as lord of Brecknock and Abergavenny; and his brother Giles, who was bishop of Hereford, dying soon after, as his heir at law, he became possessed of all his wealth and territories. Thus our Welsh lady had at least a rich husband, whatever else might have been his demerits.

As might have been expected, he inherited all his father's animosity against king John, who caused his mother and brother to be put to a lingering and horrid death; and however deservedly drove his father a homeless vagabond over the face of the earth to die a beggar's death in a foreign land. The removal of his parents from this bustling scene of life, to make room for his own entrance on it the sooner, were crimes perhaps easily forgiven by our ambitious Norman; but there was another reason for his hostility to his sovereign, not so easily subdued. As the heir of William de Breos, we have shewn in our life of Maud de Haia, how he

\* This is the William de Breos whom Llewelyn ab Iorwerth caused to be hanged, in after years, for seducing the Princess Joan his queen.

was deeply in the monarch's debt, with ample power but without the least inclination, to liquidate any portion of it; and as he doubtless found it more convenient to fight the king than pay him, he took his measures accordingly. By the influence acquired through his union with the princess Gwladys, and strengthened by his alliance with her father, he long combated the forces and resisted the attacks of John and his successor with various success, but ultimately preserving his property though often defeated by his adversaries. Faithless as his father, though neither as reckless nor cruel, soon after his marriage Gwladys had the mortification and sorrow to find her husband had deserted the alliance with her father, and having reconciled himself to the king of England, he turned his arms against his late friends. But it was soon found by all parties that Reginald de Breos was one who could "turn, and turn, and turn again;" for upon some disgust or new views of policy, he again withdrew his alliance and engaged in a confederacy with Llewelyn and the English barons in resisting the power of his sovereign. John, however, in the last year of his reign, revenged himself by marching into Wales and burning his castles of Hay and Radnor. Upon the accession of Henry III., overtures were made, to detach him from the interest of Llewelyn and his adherents; and among other articles it was proposed that as a reward for his obedience his English estates should be restored to him, to be held on the same terms as those which bound his late brother bishop Giles. The English monarch knew his man well; a true De Breos in his enormous greediness for gain, he was caught by the bait, and thus allured, his poor wife Gwladys had the unhappiness to find that he had again deserted her father, regardless of the solemn engagements he had made with him, returned to England, when the castles of Totness, Barnstaple, and other escheated property were delivered up to him by the commands of the English sovereign.

We may naturally suppose that at this juncture Gwladys returned to her father,\* but how the children of De Breos

\* Among the scenic charms of the river Neath and its tributary streams are some cataracts of great beauty; and among them on the river Tyddin is a

were disposed of is unknown. Llewelyn justly incensed at such a breach of faith, laid siege to the town of Brecknock, which in the first transport of his rage, he determined to demolish. But afterwards, upon the humble petition of the burgesses, and the earnest intercession of his nephew Rhys, he was prevailed upon to spare it; and having taken five hostages for their future good behaviour, and one hundred marks as a compensation to his troops for their march, he crossed the mountains towards Gower. Reginald, now ashamed of his conduct, or alarmed for the safety of his Welsh possessions, and regretting perhaps his absence from a beloved wife who seems never to have interfered in politics, found himself in a perilous dilemma. Attended by six knights he came to Llanquik, a parish in Glamorganshire, where his father-in-law was then encamped, and tendered him his submission, earnestly entreating pardon for his past conduct, and promising never to offend him again. Llewelyn, with characteristic generosity and clemency, not only instantly forgave his former perfidy, but received him with all the mildness of paternal affection; and in the plenitude of confidence put him in possession of the strong fortress of Caerphilly, doubtless the largest castle in Wales, situate in the highlands of Glamorganshire. He then proceeded with his troops to Dyved, and concluded the campaign with equal honour to himself and advantage to his country.

The reconciliation between Reginald and Llewelyn was highly resented by the court of London, and in consequence of it, the lordships of Blaenllyvai and Talgarth, which since the death of his brother bishop Giles, had been enjoyed by Reginald, were by a royal mandate transferred to Peter Fitzherbert.

In all probability Reginald employed the years that followed his reconciliation with Llewelyn, in a crusade or pilgrimage to Jerusalem. For Dugdale says, "one of the charters cascade that bears the name of *Yacwd Gwladys*. It is probable it was so called from this lady, who during her first husband's defection may have accompanied her father in his Glamorganshire warfare campaign, and making the vicinity of the cascade the scene of her meditations, her name was given to it by some of her admiring contemporaries.

to the monks of Brecon was granted after his return from the Holy Land; which also accounts for his effigy being placed cross-legged on his tomb." Nothing further is known of the life or exploits of this first husband of Gwladys; but, according to Theophilus Jones, he died in 1228; and was buried in the Priory Church of Brecon.\*

Gwladys remained a widow twelve years, and in the year 1240 was married to Ralph Mortimer,† lord of Melinydd, in Radnorshire, another of the powerful Norman barons who possessed several castles, and a considerable extent of territory in Wales. On her union with him, her father gave the territories of Kerry and Kedownyn, as her marriage portion; and as this property was contiguous to the other possessions of his son-in-law, he must have found this a very desirable arrangement.

In the Year 1242, we find her husband extending his possessions southward, by building the castles of Knucklas, and Keven-llys, all in the neighbourhood of his other dominions. One curious circumstance attended this union, which aids to mark the character of a man, who in after years became so signally infamous. William de Breos the younger, her late husband's eldest son by his first marriage, "was so little pleased with this second marriage of his father's widow, that he contested her right to the jointure assigned her by her late husband;" but, according to Theophilus

\* The poet Thomas Churchyard mentions, in his rude versification, that Reginald's effigy lies cross-legged, on his monument, which position always designated those who had visited the holy sepulchre; and that the material of which this effigy was carved was

"Of most hard wood, which wood as divers say,  
No worm can eat, nor Tyme can weare away."

But like many other things "which divers say," it is now completely falsified; for not a pinch of dust remains of this famous wood either in the form of Reginald or the crouching hound at his feet.

† The Mortimers are descended from the niece of Gonora, wife of Richard I. Duke of Normandy. Among the Norman adventurers in Wales they obtained by conquest a considerable portion of Radnorshire, after defeating Edric the Wild (Edric Sylvaticus), a Saxon who had seized these districts from the Welsh.



Jones, it "does not appear that he was successful in his opposition."

But however blest by affluence, and protected by power, Gwladys was far from enjoying unalloyed happiness. She observed, with natural regret, that her new husband, contrary to the calculations of her father, was unchangeably firm in his attachment to English interests, and in every instance of hostility between the two nations, always in opposition to the independence of Wales. Under these circumstances, she became estranged to her father's court, as she could have no intercourse where her husband's views were beheld with a jealous eye, if not with the more decided glance of hostility. Another cause existed, that made her visits to her father still less desirable. Llewelyn ab Iorwerth had contracted a second marriage with the Lady Joan, daughter of John, the reigning king of England. This princess is supposed to have alienated the affection and fomented the quarrels and heart-burnings between her husband and his eldest son. When she gave birth to her son David, her motive for such proceedings became more apparent; and when, by her machinations she succeeded in after-time in inducing Llewelyn to disinherit the unhappy Prince Griffith, and to name David as his successor, the dislike of Gwladys, to her English stepmother as might be expected, became a confirmed hatred. On her father's death in 1240, and the succession of David to the throne of North Wales, Gwladys induced her husband to unite his interests with her sister-in-law Sina, the bishop of Bangor, and certain confederated noblemen of Wales, to solicit David, for the liberation of Prince Griffith from his confinement in Criccieth castle. Although many of the principal chieftains of the country took an earnest part in this generous undertaking, all their exertions proved unavailing. Even the influence of the king of England, which the confederates had secured in favour of that measure, ultimately took a contrary turn, and ended in his perpetual confinement in the tower of London.

As the law now stood, the children of Prince Griffith were excluded from the succession; and Prince David being



childless, Gwladys became heiress presumptive to the throne of North Wales; but with a singular and audacious disregard of national right Henry III., named his own son Edward, as the future inheritor of the principality of Wales.

In the year 1241, when David revolted from his shameful vassalage to the English king, provoked to frenzy by the last-stated insult, his first act of hostility was to revenge himself on his half-sister Gwladys and her husband, for their interference in favour of the unfortunate Prince Griffith. He laid their territories waste, with fire and sword; and then proceeded to inflict the same severities on other feudatories of the king of England.

Having long given up all hopes of being enabled to relieve her unhappy brother Griffith from the miseries of imprisonment in a gloomy fortress, in the year 1244 she had to endure the heaviest stroke of affliction, from the death of that beloved and much wronged brother, who perished, as related in our life of Sina, in his attempt to escape from the tower of London.

In the year 1346, when the death of David took place, it is probable there would have been a strong party in favour of placing Gwladys on the vacant throne of North Wales; as the chieftains of the country had solemnly renounced their allegiance to the line and posterity of Griffith, but for one insurmountable bar—her marriage with an Englishman. In Sir Ralph Mortimer, the husband of Gwladys, they not only beheld an Englishman, but one who, notwithstanding his union with their princess, and his large possessions in Wales and its borders, always advocated English interests, in opposition to the weal of Wales. Under these circumstances the people most wisely transferred their allegiance to Llewelyn, the gallant son of their lost Prince Griffith.

Neither the period of the death of Gwladys nor her place of interment is upon record; but it is certain she died before the fall of her nephew Llewelyn ab Griffith, whom her husband and her son successively opposed in arms, till the entire subjugation of the country by the English. That memorable crisis, which became the gradual

work of centuries to accomplish, was at length brought about by an army commanded by her grandson Sir Edmund Mortimer, in the year 1282; emphatically proving the evil tendency, at that time, to Wales, of English alliances by marriages. For the better part of a century previous to the destruction of Welsh independence, the prevalence among the Welsh princes and chieftains, of marrying with English ladies; and of English nobles with the princesses and noble ladies of Wales, grew frequent. Unfortunately, in all cases these unions became fatal in their consequences, and like subterranean fires, worked insidiously towards the final explosion,—the grand catastrophe of Cambrian annihilation and English triumph. We find David ab Owen Gwyneth, to support him in his usurpation of the crown of North Wales, married the princess Emma, sister of Henry II. of England; Henry is said to be the inventor of this species of "seduction," as Warrington calls it. In this, as in later instances, it had the evil effect of bringing foreign troops to oppose legitimate succession, and to uphold usurpation and its hideous train of evils; while the unlawful monarch of the day, shorn of the splendour of independence, became the contemptible satrap of the king of England. Griffith ab Madoc, lord of Dinas Brân, is stigmatized in Welsh history as a traitor to his country, in consequence of his marriage with the lady Emma, daughter of Lord James Audley, Llewelyn ab Iorwerth's union with the lady Joan, daughter of King John, caused him to disinherit his eldest son, and change the order of succession; one of the most disastrous of measures, which led that gallant prince to sink from the patriot hero of his early life to the voluntary vassal of the English king, in the dotage of his old age. Lastly, the heroine of this memoir, by her two English marriages wrought far more evil than good to her country, although her father and the Welsh politicians of his day may have urged each match and anticipated from it contrary consequences. Another result of these marriages was, that it brought the English tongue, or the wretched anglo-Saxon jargon so called, into repute and fashion, at the different courts and castles in Wales, to the prejudice of the native

language, which at this period had attained great perfection. We have the authority of the celebrated poet, Lewis, of Glyn cothi, for stating that Gwladys Ddu, the lady of our memoir, although married successively to two English noblemen, was not among those anti-patriotic ladies who encouraged this new-fangled folly; but she is favourably noted for supporting the vernacular strains of the bards and harpers of Wales, to the latest period of her existence.

In closing our memoir of the Princess Gwladys Ddu, we naturally turn, with that interest which historical occurrences ever command, to the remarkable race which sprang from her union with Sir Ralph Mortimer. As the most memorable events in English history, are not only connected with, but take their origin from the personal character of these Mortimers, which brought some to the block, and elevated others to the throne, a slight notice of the progeny of Ralph Mortimer and his Welsh wife Gwladys Ddu, will not be out of place here.

ROGER MORTIMER, son of Ralph and Gwladys, was remarkable only for his active but unavailing hostility towards Prince Llewelyn ab Griffith, his maternal uncle; and for supporting English interests in Wales,—succeeded by his son.

EDMUND MORTIMER, like his grandfather and father, warred against the independence of Wales, and succeeded in the grand object wherein they both failed. The army under his command had the honour of defeating Llewelyn ab Griffith, who gallantly fell in the field of battle on the banks of the river Irvon, near Builth or Bualt, Breconshire, in the eighth year of the reign of King Edward I. He was succeeded by his son, ROGER MORTIMER—made earl of March, in the reign of King Edward II. At first we find him honourably engaged, with the barons of England, to put down the pernicious influence of the favourites of King Edward II. After their destruction, and the cruel murder of that unfortunate monarch, he became an equally pestilent character to the nation, as the unworthy paramour of Edward's infamous queen. He was the "gentle Mortimer" of this criminal French woman, whom Gray the

poet has eternally stigmatised as the "she wolf of France," for the part she took in causing her husband's death. He was deservedly beheaded, in the year 1330, by the command of King Edward III. Succeeded by his grandson, EDMUND MORTIMER, earl of March. He appears to have been an amiable contrast to his criminal grandfather. He married Philippa, only daughter of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the third son of King Edward III., and was by that monarch appointed lord-deputy of Ireland, and died in his government there, in the year 1382. Succeeded by his son, ROGER MORTIMER, earl of March, born at Usk, in Monmouthshire; he was appointed, by Richard II., lord-deputy of Ireland; and by virtue of his descent by his mother from Edward III. he was nominated by parliament as heir apparent, to succeed to the throne after King Richard II. He did not live to enjoy that honour, having been murdered in the Irish insurrection of 1415. To avenge his death and punish the rebels, Richard II. personally led an army into Ireland. Succeeded by his son,\* EDMUND MORTIMER.

EDMUND MORTIMER the rightful heir to the crown of England, was only six years of age at his father's death, when he and his younger brother were imprisoned in Windsor Castle by the usurper, Henry IV., to deter his friends from raising Edmund to the throne. His uncle, Sir Edmund Mortimer, was at this time a willing prisoner with Owen Glendower in Wales, having married that chieftain's daughter. These children were at length delivered from their captivity by the contrivance of Lady Constance Spencer, who caused false keys to be made. Having effected their deliverance, she was hurrying with them towards Wales when she was overtaken, and with the children imprisoned in Windsor Castle.† From this

\* Sir Edmund Mortimer, the brother of this Roger, earl of March, after being taken prisoner by Owen Glendower, in 1424, married that chieftain's daughter, and united with him and Harry Percy, earl of Northumberland, to dethrone Henry IV. and raise his nephew, Edmund, to the crown; in which aim they were baffled by the disastrous result of the battle of Shrewsbury.

† The poor smith who made the false keys, after having both his hands cut off, was beheaded.

state Edmund was delivered by the magnanimity of Henry V., who, though well aware of his prior right to the throne, not only released him from confinement, but treated him with great kindness and made him the most powerful subject in the realm. The earl of March was not ungrateful; he allowed his claims to slumber, and served Henry faithfully. Died, without issue, in the third year of the reign of Henry VI. Succeeded by his sister, ANNE MORTIMER, married to Richard Conesburgh, earl of Cambridge, second son of Edward, duke of York. This union became the fertile source of troubles that long agitated the kingdom. Her husband, conspiring against Henry V. to recover the crown for his brother-in-law, Roger Mortimer, earl of March, was tried and executed in 1415, previous to Henry's departure for France to fight the battle of Agincourt. The elder brother of Anne's husband was Richard, duke of York, who fell in that battle; and having no issue he was succeeded by his nephew

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, duke of York, son of the earl of Cambridge, who was beheaded at Southampton in 1415; following in the footsteps of his father, he commenced the civil wars of England, called the wars of the Roses, by claiming the crown for himself. Defeated by Queen Margaret, and slain at the battle of Wakefield, in 1460, and his head, crowned with paper, placed over the city gates of York. Succeeded by his son, Edward, earl of March, who afterwards became

KING EDWARD IV. Whence Edward V. and young Richard, duke of York, the children murdered in the tower of London by order of their uncle, the duke of Gloucester, who then became

KING RICHARD III.; slain in the battle of Bosworth field, in 1485, which ended the royal race of the Plantagenets and the civil wars of York and Lancaster, by the succession of the Lancasterian earl of Richmond, who became

KING HENRY VII.; and marrying the daughter of Edward IV., united the two houses of York and Lancaster.



## THE LADY GWYLADYS.

DAUGHTER OF SIR DAVID GAM, WIDOW OF SIR ROGER VAUGHAN OF BREDWARDINE; WIFE OF SIR WILLIAM AB THOMAS, OF RHAGLAN CASTLE; AND MOTHER OF LORD WILLIAM HERBERT, EARL OF PEMBROKE, AND SIR RICHARD HERBERT, OF COLDBROOK,\* MONMOUTHSHIRE.

"SEREN VENNI,"—*Lewis Glyncothi.*

ABERGAVENNY'S BRILLIANT STAR.—*Translation.*

GWYLADYS was the daughter of a gentleman of considerable wealth and landed property, who, in after years, became very celebrated as a military character. His proper name was David ab Llewelyn ab Howel Vychan. But he is better known to posterity as David Gam; so called from a cast in his eye: *Gam*, or *Cam*, being a Welsh word literally signifying crooked; but applied to an obliquity of vision, means squinting. And that appellation, originally a descriptive nickname, in the course of time became generally accepted, and more honoured than his legitimate designation.

The mother of Gwladys was a lady of the name of Gwenllïan, daughter of Gwilym ab Howel, an affluent country gentleman, residing at his seat called Grach, in Elval, on the banks of the Wye, Radnorshire. The family residence of the parents of Gwladys was principally on an estate near the town of Brecon, called Petyn Gwyn, in the parish of Garthbrenghy.† Another residence of theirs was

\* Although her two ennobled sons only are here mentioned, Gwladys, by her first marriage, was the mother of five children, hereafter to be noticed; and among others, of Thomas Vaughan of Hergest, married to Ellen Gethin, who was killed at the battle of Danesmore, where his two above named half brothers were beheaded; and of eight children, including the above (the Herberts), by her second marriage.

† Theophilus Jones, in his history of the town and county of Brecknock, says, "the whole of Garthbrenghy, at one time or other, and, indeed, the whole of the county, has been in the possession of the family of the Gams; but the mansion and principal residence of the valorous ancestor, from whom they derive their name, was Petyn Gwyn."

Old Court, in the county of Monmouth, "the site of which is in a field adjoining Llandeilo Cressanwy House, on the Lanvapley road, midway between Abergavenny and Monmouth."\* She had two brothers older than herself, of the respective names of Morgan and Thomas; and it is probable they were all born at Petyn Gwyn, previous to the year 1402, a period very disastrous to the father of this family; fatal to his wife, and most perilous and distressing to the children.

Nothing can be more true than that point so tardily conceded by the world, though still opposed by bad novelists and dreary dramatists who deal in beatific heroes and diabolical villains, that no men are wholly good or wholly bad. Thus it was with Sir David Gam; in Welsh history his name is a blot that stains the fair page which records his deeds; while in English or Anglo-Cambrian annals he shines forth as a star of some magnitude.

The murder of Richard II., and the usurpation of Henry IV., in England, and the insurrection of Owen Glendower, in Wales, were the stirring political events of these times. In our account of "Glendower's Female Family," in this work, we have stated the particulars of that great outbreak, which agitated England and Wales for fifteen years. This rebellion originating in a private wrong endured by that chieftain, after his success in righting himself, became the pretence for a public regeneration of the country, which in the opinion of the Welsh who favoured Glendower, could only be effected by casting off the yoke of England, and expelling the English entirely from its soil. During the two hundred years which had nearly passed away since the death of Llewelyn, its last native prince, and the conquest of the country, as might be expected, many of the principal families in Wales not only became reconciled to English rule, but preferred their

\* Cox, in his Monmouthshire Tour, remarks, "Mr. Lewis (Llandeilo Cressanwy), pointed out to me in the midst of an adjoining field, which is part of a farm belonging to the duke of Beaufort, called the park, the site of Old Court, formerly the residence of Sir David Gam. It was formerly the red deer park pertaining to Rhaglan Castle.

government to that of their native princes, of which they knew little beyond what they received through the uncertain channels of tradition. Those Welshmen who enjoyed posts of honour or emolument under the English sovereigns thus had their motives for loyalty greatly strengthened, and their services insured to the reigning monarch. Of the latter kind was the family of Sir David Gam of Breconshire. With his violent temperament and strong political bias, although evidently stimulated only by expediency, for principle could have no share in his devotion to the house of Lancaster, David Gam could view his aspiring countryman in no other light than that of a disturber of the public peace, and the traitorous enemy of the sovereign whom he served; wilfully forgetting that Owen Glendower had all his life been the consistent and faithful adherent of King Richard, even beyond the grave,\* while he himself espoused the cause of an usurper. Well would it have been for the honour and reputation of David Gam, had he acted on the views which he professed, and openly opposed in arms the man whom he had, as he conceived, doomed to destruction. But as he descended to the baseness of calling the dark spirit of treachery to his aid, in ridding his king of a powerful foe, it is the business of history to deal with him according to the enormity of his guilt.

The subsequent conduct of Bolingbroke leaves him open to the suspicion of having secretly employed David Gam to assassinate the enemy whom his forces had failed to crush in the field. Gam voluntarily entered the service of Glendower, and appeared, like the rest of his partizans, an enthusiastic supporter of his cause.

It was in the year 1402, that bright period in the existence of Glendower, when that wonderful man had successively triumphed over Lord Reginald Grey of Ruthin and the various powers sent against him by the king of England, that the father of the lady of this memoir cast

\* It is worthy of remark that the father of David Gam filled the same office at the court of Henry IV. which Owen Glendower occupied under Richard II.; that of scutiger or squire to the king.

off his disguise of Welsh patriotism, and exhibited himself in his true character. It was on the day fixed for the coronation of the triumphant hero of the day, now to be transformed into a sovereign prince, and clad in the trappings of royalty, when every chieftain came forward to render his willing homage, that David Gam was discovered—like the demon of malignity—lowering on the imposing scene. He grasped a dagger in his hand, and stood prepared to rush forward and plunge it in the bosom of the man hailed by his countrymen as the liberator of the nation from English bondage, when he was seized, and stood condemned, by his own vaunting confession of his intent. That the detected and baffled traitor was not instantly put to death, may be attributed to the clemency or superstition of Glendower, who might consider such an act of severity, however well merited, as an ill omen on the day dedicated to the celebration of his prosperous fortunes. However, David Gam had to endure many years of close captivity in a prison at Machynlleth, in Montgomeryshire.\*

Had Owen Glendower limited his resentment to the incarceration of his treacherous countryman, it would have been well for his fame, which stands deeply tarnished by his appalling proceedings in visiting his vengeance on the unoffending family of his victim. He is recorded to have entered Breconshire with a strong party of his followers, and arriving at Petyn Gwyn, seized on the Lady Gwenllian, wife of Gam, and after dishonouring her in the most atrocious manner, shut her up in the house, and burnt the mansion to the ground. After these dire doings, at which humanity shudders, and while the house was still in flames, Owen is represented as fiercely triumphing in his diabolical revenge, as commemorated by himself in a Welsh Euclyn, or epigram, spontaneously produced on the occasion. Perhaps in the entire history of the metrical art or poetic inspiration, never was the devilish voice of a Fury muse awakened by a more infernal transaction, or to a more heartless and

\* This place at Machynlleth, in Montgomeryshire, still bears the name of "Carchardy Owain Glyndwr," or Owen Glendower's prison.



demoniac incantation. The chieftain, in this *select* little composition, appears near the scene of his recent enormities, calling to a shepherd, one of David Gam's tenants, in the following *magnanimous* strain:—

O Gwell di wr coch Cam  
Yn ymovyn y girnlgwen,  
Dywed ei bôd hi tan y lan  
A nôd y glo ar ei phen.

The following is a translation:—

Seest thou a red-hair'd squinting urchin  
For his lost white-horn'd one\* searching,  
Tell him beneath the bank she's laid,  
Black coal for ochre marks her head.

Thus it was that Gwladys, the lady of our memoir, and her two brothers, though both her seniors, still but young children, so awfully lost their unhappy mother, how these children were preserved from the murderous violence here described, has never been recorded; but it may be surmised that they were at this time, either in the care of foster parents, in the immediate neighbourhood: or that in the confusion of the assault they were safely borne away by some attached servants, and brought to their father's other mansion, Old Court, in the county of Monmouth.

After this horrible catastrophe, David Gam remained a prisoner at Machynlleth full ten years, and was liberated at length by the intervention of the king of England. This circumstance makes it probable that there was a private understanding between them, previous to Gam's entrance into the service of Glendower; which, if true, will account for the peculiar conduct which we have detailed of the former. "In the year 1412," observes Theophilus Jones, "David Gam was still in durance, and Henry negotiating for his release. He was under the necessity of permitting *by writ*, his esquire, Llewelyn ab Howel, father of David Gam, to make use of Sir John Tiptofte and William Botiller, to treat with Glendower for his enlargement; but the result is not recorded." The probability is, that through the successful intervention of his English friends, David Gam

\* Meaning the violated and murdered wife of David Gam.



obtained his release about the latter end of the year 1412. One thing, however, is certain, that no sooner did he gain his liberty than he took every opportunity to harass and annoy Glendower and his partizans. He attacked them with his own tenantry and the forces left at his disposal by England, and betrayed the designs of Owen to the king, whenever he could discover them. This conduct drew on him the vengeance of his adversary once more, who entered Monmouthshire with the most hostile determination, and destroyed Gam's mansion of Old Court, as he had formerly done that of Petyu Gwyn in 1402. Fortunately, in the latter affair, there appears to have been no sacrifice of human life. David Gam, probably expecting such a day of retribution, from the known character of his enemy, made a timely escape with his three children to England, and found refuge with his father, at the court of Henry IV.

To dismiss with the best speed the bad portion of Gam's character, and hasten towards the brilliant part of his career, we may here state, that besides his treachery to Glendower, there is another heavy stain on his memory. Previous to the transactions recorded above, in a bitter family feud, he assaulted a near relative, his uncle, and slew him in the street at Brecon. And now, *having given his worst of deeds the worst of words*, divested of all local partiality, it will be pleasant to record his future proceedings, which were as honourable to his name as the former stood heinously disgraceful.

Thus driven from their last home in Wales, Gwladys, with her father, grandfather, and her two brothers, found her new home in the metropolis of England, and at the court of its monarch, however strange at first, in the course of time not only endurable, but happy. Here she spent some of the most important years of her girlhood, a circumstance that was doubtless favourable to her education, in the acquirement of the accomplishments of her time, which so eminently fitted her to grace that station in society, to which she was called in after time. What other advantages she gained from this change of nation, language, and manners, we are not informed, nor, whatever

they might be, whether they permanently added to her stock of happiness. It would appear that about the seventeenth year of her age Gwyladys returned to Wales as she was married at a very early age to Rosser Vychan, Anglicised into Roger Vaughan, Esq., of Bredwardine Castle, in Herefordshire,\* a gentleman of wealth, rank, and high respectability; an especial friend of her father's, and in after years his companion in arms in the hard fought battle field of Agincourt. From the period of her marriage she never again left Wales, but spent a great portion of her long life in entire happiness at the castle of Bredwardine. In the famous elegy written on her by the poet Lewis Glyncothi, she is especially praised for her patronage of the Welsh language; so that it appears her long residence in England did not cool her affection either for her mother tongue or her fatherland. It is not improbable but that those Welsh partizans of the English court, her father's select friends, among whom she spent her days, might have evinced their partiality for the English language, which they introduced into and encouraged in Wales; and doubtless it was to counteract this unpatriotic influence that Gwladys personally encouraged the vernacular Welsh. She was not only a supporter of her native language but a liberal encourager of everything laudable in Cambrian nationality; especially of the bards and minstrels of her time, to whose occasional or regular periodic visits the munificent halls of Bredwardine were ever open, the plenteous board and hirlas horn prepared, and the final "largess," in gold and silver, with other gifts, liberally distributed. When it is considered that there were neither newspapers, magazines, nor reviews, circulating in those days, the appreciation of this order of men, who travelled through every district of the principality, and visited

\* Bredwardine Castle was situated on the banks of the Wye, two miles above Moccas, or Moccas Court, the seat of Sir George Amyand Cornwall Bart., M.P. It has long been destroyed: the ruins are said to have furnished great part of the materials used in the erection of the ancient residence of the Cornwalls at Moccas. From the imperfect traces that remain, it appears to have been a strong and massive fortress.

every mansion of note, was held in very high regard by the wealthy, who alone could afford to entertain and reward them, that they were literally indispensable; and, indeed, it was no slight degree of affluence that proved equal to such an extensive expenditure. In Lewis Glyncothi's elegy, among other honourable designations, Gwladys is called "the strength and support of Gwentland and the land of Brychan" (the counties of Monmouth and Brecon):\* the poor of which countries she supported on a very extensive scale.

Previous to the year 1415, she had become the mother of five children, some of whom in after time performed conspicuous parts in the great drama of life. Her three sons were Watkin, Thomas, and Rosser; and her two daughters, Elizabeth and Blanch. They were all united in marriage with persons of the first consideration in their day. Watkin married a daughter of Sir Henry Wogan; Thomas espoused the daring and eccentric Ellen Gethin, as narrated in her memoir; and Rosser (afterwards known as the second Sir Roger Vaughan of Tretower), became the husband of the beautiful Cicely, daughter of Thomas ab Philip Vychan, of Talgarth, celebrated as "Dâm Sisil" in one of the poems of Lewis Glyncothi. Her daughters were equally well married; Elizabeth became the wife of a gentleman named Griffith ab Eineon; and Blanch was united to an Englishman of fortune of the name of John Milwater.

The tranquility and happiness which had thus far favoured the married days of Gwladys were now about to take their departure, and to be succeeded by fatal wars, and their usual consequences of premature death and unavailing sorrow. Great changes had taken place in the political hemisphere of England; Henry IV. had been struck off the list of living monarchs, and his throne filled by his heroic son, Henry V., more honoured in Wales by

\* As Bredwardine Castle where she resided is in Herefordshire, it is rather curious that county is not mentioned as partaking of her munificence, unless *Gwentland*, according to the ancient division of the country, included a portion of Herefordshire.

his popular designation of Harry of Monmouth. The year 1415 saw that daring prince embark for the continent for the invasion of France, the crown of which kingdom he claimed in right of its conquest by his ancestor, Edward III. Among the many thousands who formed his army were David Gam, the father of Gwladys, Rosser Vychan, or Roger Vaughan, her husband, and her third son of the same name, then a very young man and recently married. Of the three, the latter alone was destined to see his home and kindred again.

As the lady of our memoir derived her principal claim to distinction from her birth and marriages, that is to say, from her near relationship to no less than four of the heroes of Agincourt (her father, son, and two husbands), a summary of the perils, sufferings, and exploits of the army of which they formed a part, that embarked for France on this memorable occasion becomes essential here; which we shall abridge to a needful compass of brevity, from different versions of national historians.

King Henry embarked with his army at Southampton, on the 19th of August, 1415. His fleet consisted of 1500 transport ships, in which were embarked 6000 men at arms, and 20,000 archers,\* making in all 50,000 men. He landed his troops at Havre de Grace, in Normandy, on the 21st of August; and without loss of time marched on to Harfleur, a fortified town nine miles distant, and invested it. After a siege of five weeks, the garrison, which had made a vigorous defence, surrendered. Henry took possession of the town, expelled the inhabitants, and repeopled it with a colony of Englishmen.† With great prudence the king caused Harfleur to be entirely repaired, and placed in a good state of defence, as a place of retreat in case of adverse fortune. In the mean time he sent a written challenge to the dauphin, then the representative of royalty in France

\* So says Rapin, but Monstrelet states 24,000 archers.

† He put forth a proclamation that all persons who would come over from England and settle at Harfleur should have houses secured to them and their heirs; upon which great numbers transplanted themselves and families thither.



during the insanity of his father, Charles VI.\* Henry now formed the resolution of marching by land through France, towards the English town of Calais. His army at this time was dreadfully afflicted with the flux, which had carried off some of the nobility, and many of the common soldiers; while in fact an entire fourth of his army was suffering in the complaint.

The French having heard of the intention of the English king prepared their forces and threw every possible impediment in the way of his march, broke down all the bridges and causeways in his route, and intrenched themselves in fortified places, while every ford or passable place on the rivers were strongly guarded by troops. Added to these disheartening obstacles, the horrors of famine beset them wherever they moved, as all the cattle were driven off on their approach, and all the provisions which could not be timely removed, destroyed. Never perhaps, on the most trying of occasions, had the peculiarities of English nationality under the gloom of disastrous fortune, been displayed more advantageously, and placed on a par with Roman daring and endurance, in the best days of her virtuous republic. Hannibal's decisive measure of burning his ships to prevent the possibility of retreat, was not more demonstrative of indomitable resolution, than the determination of the English king to march forward; although safety within the walls of Harfleur was in the rear, and a probability of annihilation in the van. But Henry had one advantage over the heroes of antiquity; his devoted followers required no impulsive measures to drive them forward, or to scare from them despondent thoughts of retreat. His small army, to a man, although suffering intensely by disease, starvation, and fatigue, that daily thinned their numbers, were as eager as himself to continue their onward course to Calais. Rapin says he continued his march along

\* This challenge was dated September, 1415; it does not appear that the dauphin sent any answer. The subject of it was an offer on the part of the English king to decide all their differences in a single combat between their two persons, these differences being no less, according to his notion, than the whole kingdom of France.



the Somme with a resolution to face whatever danger awaited them on the other side. As the passages, however, were no longer defended, he found one between St. Quintin and Peronne, where, on the 19th October he caused his army to pass. But when this obstacle, which had hitherto seemed the greatest, was removed, the English army found themselves in no better condition.\* They soon learnt that the French were immensely their superiors in numerical strength, healthy and unharrassed, issuing in all directions from their comfortable quarters, buoyant in spirits and full of insolent swagger, prepared to waylay and give them battle, as soon as they came in contact with them.

"While the English monarch and his army were on their route in this deplorable condition, the constable of France, who was the commander in chief, and the princes who were in the French army, sent three heralds to offer him battle, leaving him to choose the time and place. Henry replied, as he had been long upon his march to Calais, they might have fought him when they pleased; and if they intended it, there was no occasion to appoint a time or place; for he was resolved to pursue his march, and they should always find him ready to received them."† Thus the French army being posted on his route, it was not possible to pass without fighting; he resolved therefore to prepure for battle. On the 22nd October the French generals sent him word by a herald, that on the Friday following, October 25th they would give him battle. Henry who had already taken his resolution, accepted the challenge, and in token of the cordiality with which he received his welcome tidings, with that royal munificence which so signally graced his character, he presented the herald with a rich robe and two hundred crowns." During the three days before the battle, Henry never ceased to inspire his troops with courage, by

\* The French historians affirm that Henry seeing himself in this sad condition, offered to restore Harfleur, and repair all damages he had caused in France since his landing, if he might be suffered to proceed unmolested; but that his offer was rejected.—*Rapin*.

† *Rapin*.

the promise of rewards and honours, and by all other means conducive to that end. He represented to them the glory of their ancestors, who obtained the victories of Cressy and Poitiers, and demonstrated to them the necessity of conquering their enemies in order to free themselves from their present and avoid still greater miseries. "His exhortations wrought so wonderful an effect, that the officers and soldiers, far from dreading the number of their foes, were extremely eager to engage." It was at this period that the father of the lady of our memoir again comes under public notice. On the day previous to the battle of Agincourt, news being brought to the king that the French army were on the march towards him, and that they were exceedingly numerous, he detached Captain Gam to observe their motion and their review number. The valiant David having narrowly eyed the advancing French, found them to exceed the English in an immense degree. The Welshman however, was too good a soldier to render a rash and literal account, which might possibly have the effect of daunting the eager courage of his fellow soldiers, therefore put forth his Cambrian wit, and gave a guarded and evasive answer gallantly reporting, that there were "*enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away.*" This pithy, well-conceived, and well-timed answer, even memorable for its spirit and originality, had its due effect; the king was delighted with it; and the army excited by it to the wildest degree of enthusiasm, waited anxiously for the hour of the onset.

Meanwhile the French, presuming on their numbers, and confident of victory, were making rejoicings in their camp. If we may believe English historians, says Rapin, so confident of success were the French leaders that they sent to the king to know what he would give for his ransom. Henry despising the bravado, replied, "that a few hours would shew whose care it would be to provide ransom." The French might well presume on their strength, as in number they were six times greater than the English,\* fresh, healthy,

\* Menzerel owns that the French were four times superior to the English; Monstrelot says six times; P. Daniel states three times; while the English

abounding with provisions, and labouring under no inconvenience. The English, on the contrary were for the most part, sick of the flux ever since they left Harfleur, grievously fatigued with a month's march through a hostile country, in very severe winter weather, during which they were half starved, and would have perished for hunger, but for the prudence of the king.

"On the 25th October, the day appointed for the battle; the two armies were drawn up as soon as it was light. The constable D'Albret, committed on this occasion an unpardonable fault in choosing for the field of battle a narrow ground, flanked on one side by a rivulet, and on the other by a large wood. He thereby lost all the advantage which the superiority of number and especially in horse, could give him. It is most certain this general ought to have posted himself in a large and open place, where he might have had it in his power to surround the English, who were but a handful of men in comparison with his army. But by drawing up on so narrow a ground, he was forced to make a front no larger than that of the enemies, and thereby depriving himself of a very manifest advantage. Neither can it be said that the choice of the field of battle was not entirely in his own breast. As the English were marching for Calais, it was his business to expect them on a spacious plain, capable of containing his whole army, and where they might have fought at once. His blindness therefore was astonishing, and can be ascribed only to his presumption and incapacity as a general. He seems to have intended to stop up that narrow passage, that the English might not proceed, without considering such a precaution can only be advantageous to the weakest.\*

While the French were drawing up Henry detached a

authors assert that their own army amounted only to one hundred and fifty thousand strong. Rapin concluded his observation, "Be this as it will, it is certain that the superiority of the French was very great."

\* The constable of France divided his army into three bodies, and drew them up on the *narrow ground*, but so close that it was easy to foresee confusion would ensue during the battle.—Rapin,



body of 400 lancers, to go and post themselves out of sight of the enemy, behind the wood, on the left of the field of battle. He lodged moreover 200 archers in a low meadow fenced with bushes on the right. Such was his army of reserve. In drawing up his forces, he could make but two lines, by reason of the small number of his troops. Edward duke of York commanded the first, and the king put himself at the head of the second, with a gold crown on his helmet for a crest, and near him was the standard of England. In this posture he expected the French would advance to attack him. Perceiving, however, that they did not move, he sent for some of his principal officers, and said to them with a cheerful countenance, "since our enemies have intercepted our way, let us proceed, and break through them, in the name of the Holy Trinity." Upon these words he directed Sir Thomas Erpingham to give the signal to commence the battle which he did by throwing up his truncheon into the air. Immediately the soldiers of the foremost ranks, removing the stakes which had been set in the front, to resist the fury of the cavalry, the whole army with a mighty shout moved forward. After advancing a little they made a halt, expecting their enemies, but finding they did not stir continued their march in good order. When they came within bowshot, the foremost ranks fixed the stakes;\* interweaving and bending them a little towards their enemy. At the same time a body of chosen archers advancing some paces, began to let fly upon the enemy a shower of arrows, a yard long, which being shot by men of dexterity and strength, did the greater execution, among the French, as they stood extremely close, and had scarce room to move. The French cavalry

\* The king considering the enemy was more powerful in horse, and that his foot, the strength of his army, would be exposed to the danger of being broken by the fury of the first charge, ordered the archers (a battalion of whom was placed in the van commanded by the duke of York,) to fix into the ground piles or stakes, pointed at both ends, and six or seven feet long; with these set in the front, and on the flanks, there being intervals left between the horse and foot, these last were secured by them, as within a little fortification. A company of pioneers was appointed for removing the piles, as the soldiers advanced or retreated.—*Rapin, Le Fevre, Elmham, Hall.*

advancing at length to repulse the archers, these last nimbly retreated behind the stakes, with a wonderful discipline in which the king had exercised them himself for some days. Meanwhile the 200 bowmen concealed in the meadow, rising up on a sudden, plied the horse with their arrows, who were put in the greatest disorder, as the horses sunk up to their knees in the ground, softened by the rains. The English seeing this confusion, threw away their bows, and fell upon their enemies, sword in hand. The English, it is said, were for the most part, forced to fight naked from the waist downwards, by reason of their distemper. However, as the first line of the French consisted of all the best troops in their army, this charge though very vigorous was repulsed with some loss on the side of the English. But that was not capable of disheartening men, determined to conquer or die. After breathing awhile, they charged again, with such resolution that it was not possible for their enemies to stand the shock. This second attack was the more difficult to be repulsed, as at the same time the French felt themselves set upon in the flank by the English horse ambushed behind the wood. Then it was that the utmost disorder ensued among the troops, so vigorously pressed by their enemies, who slew without mercy whatever came in their way. The first line of the French at length taking to flight, (after seeing the constable killed, with a great number of other officers, and most of the princes and generals made prisoners,) the English found themselves stopped by the second line which came to repair the disorder.

Meanwhile Henry advancing with his second line, as the first gained ground, stood ready to support his men, who would have been in danger of being routed, if he had been farther off. Whilst the first body, after so gallant a fight, were retiring to the right and left, to make way for the king and to rally in his rear, Henry alighting from his horse, presented himself to an enemy with an undaunted countenance. The duke of Alencon, prince of the blood-royal of France, advanced at the head of his body, with great intrepidity, hoping by his conduct and valour to repair the disgrace received by his countrymen. Henry, for his



THE  
**HEROINES OF WELSH HISTORY;**  
 OR,  
*Memoirs of the Celebrated Women of Wales.*

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**PARTS SIXTH AND SEVENTH.**

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part, marching with a fierceness heightened by the success of his first troops, charged the second line with a valour equal to that of the most renowned heroes of antiquity. He fought on foot at the head of his men, rushing among the thickest of the enemies, as forgetting that upon his life depended the fate of the army.

The result of this battle will ever serve to prove the poverty of military genius in France at this period; and the following anecdote illustrates how slightly some of their *high born* were actuated by chivalrous feeling, and how strongly, by dastardly bravo-like enterprizes for cutting off or assassinating the most illustrious of their foes, who otherwise, by the chance of war might escape in a fair-fought field. During the preparation for the battle, it appears the duke of Alencon, the most active of the French commanders, had conceived a very singular scheme for the certain destruction of the English king, as unknightly and murderous as ever was planned by the barbarity of a savage—and this too in an age when noblemen generally plumed themselves on their chivalrous bearing towards an open foe. He engaged sixteen French knights by a solemn sacramental oath, taken in the church where they watched, fasted, and prayed, during the entire night previous to the day of battle, that they should forsake every object in the field to ensure the death of Henry, whom they were to surround, and not quit till they laid him dead on the earth. Agreeably to their engagement they now took measures for attaining their end, and had succeeded in unhorsing the king, when David Gam discovered his peril, and saw the "Royal Harry" with the regal crown which encircled his helmet partly beaten off his brow, fighting on foot, scarcely able to wield his battle-axe, while slightly supported by a few exhausted followers. In all the wild impetuosity of his character, David Gam called aloud, in right good racy Welsh, for the men of Brecon to come forward and save the king. He was soon answered by his son-in-law and grandson, the two Roger Vaughans, Walter Lloyd, and William ab Thomas, who, with other Welshmen rushing forward made a desperate charge, and succeeded

in cutting down every one of these unknightly knights of France.

But the personal perils of King Henry were not yet over ; "the heat of the battle increasing, Henry, still more animated by his past danger, gave signal proofs of his valour, and drew upon him the bravest of his enemies. The Duke of Gloucester his brother, (the good Duke Humphrey,) who fought by his side, being knocked down, he long covered him with his own body, to prevent his being killed. By this bold action he was so exposed that at length he received so great a blow on the head that he fell on his knees. But his guard immediately advancing, repulsed the enemy and gave him time to rise. The king's danger and the wonders he performed, inspired his troops with a sort of fury. On a sudden, as it were by general consent, the English soldiers encouraging one another, rushed upon their enemies, and by their violent and unexpected attack, put them in such disorder that their leaders could never repair it. Henry improving this advantage, pressed them vigorously, to hinder them from recovering out of their surprise; knowing this was the moment in which the victory was to be decided. Their disorder increasing by reason of their great numbers and want of room, they began at length only to fight in retreat, in such manner as showed they would quickly take to flight.

The duke of Alencon, enraged to see the battle lost by the defeat of the second line, and despairing that the third would be able to restore the fight, generously resolved to die honorably, rather than turn his back, and survive his country's disgrace. So, regardless of a life he was determined to lose, with a small number of brave and resolute persons, he furiously made way with his sword through the English troops, and everywhere sought the king of England, in expectation of revenging, by one blow, the loss France had that day sustained. It was not difficult to find Henry, who thought of nothing less than concealing himself. The moment the duke saw him, he ran at him, and crying out *he was the Duke of Alencon*, discharged so violent a blow on



his head, that it cleared off one half of the gold crown on his helmet. Henry not being able to parry this blow, was not slow to revenge. In return he struck the duke to the ground, and with repeated blows slew two of his brave attendants. In an instant the duke was surrounded by a crowd of enemies, who put an end to his life, notwithstanding the king's endeavours to save him. The death of the duke of Alencon entirely discouraging his troops, they openly took to flight.

The third line of the French being still fresh and in good order, might have renewed the battle, but their hearts failing at the sight of the present and past slaughter,\* it was not in the power of their leaders to make them advance. So finding themselves reduced to a necessity of retreating without fighting, they left the flying troops of the second line exposed to the fury of their enemies, who closely pursued them. Then it was that the English, having nothing else to do but to kill state prisoners, exercised pity or cruelty according as every one was naturally inclined. The king was no sooner relieved by the Welsh from his imminent peril than three of the foremost of his rescuers paid the penalty of their loyalty and daring; these were David Gam, his son-in-law the elder Vaughan, and Walter Lloyd—who dropped down on the field, exhausted with their superhuman exertions and loss of blood: they were in fact dying of their mortal wounds. When Henry heard of their condition, how that they were past all hope of recovery, he hastened to the spot, and deeply affected with the agonies of these brave men, knighted the three on the field, where they soon afterwards expired.

One event connected with this battle will ever remain a subject of regret, a massacre of a portion of the French prisoners, related at large in Rapin, who thus remarks on the untoward circumstance. "It is a pity so glorious a victory was sullied by this rash massacre. It may however be excused, by the impossibility of the English being able

\* Or rather when they observed the English horse, by King Henry's order wheeled off to charge them in the rear.—Polydore Virgil.

to guard their prisoners,\* and by the king's just fears, that these same prisoners would turn against him, during the fight, which he saw himself on the point of renewing."

After the battle the king's first care was to return thanks to God for so signal and unexpected a victory. The fight began at ten o'clock in the morning, and lasted till almost five in the afternoon. Henry not thinking proper to continue his march, for fear of fatiguing his army too much returned to Masconcelles, where he had encamped the foregoing night.†

However glorious and flattering this unparalleled victory might be to national pride, it was a mournful day to the kindred of the slain, to view the vacant places at the family hearths, where fathers, sons, and brothers were wont to be assembled at the social meal or evening-meeting; and to none more than to the unhappy Gwladys, when she learnt from the lips of her weeping son that both her husband and her father had fallen on the field of Agincourt, and never could greet her sight again, nor their voices fill her ear! The bearer of these dismal tidings, her third and youngest son, now bore the title of Sir Roger Vaughan, having like his renowned grandfather and father been created Knight Banneret on the field of battle; thus, both his mother and his wife respectively became entitled to the honour of being styled Lady Vaughan; the first of Bredwardine, and the latter of Tretower.

Both these ladies were destined soon after to lose their designations; the younger lady Vaughan, soon after the

\* According to J. des Ursins, they amounted to fourteen thousand; and consequently equalled, or rather exceeded in number all the English forces.

† In a note to Rapin's records of this battle it is stated, "the curious reader may see an account of all the remarkable persons slain or taken prisoners in this battle, in Jean Le Fevre, who says he was in the English army. He states that in all there were ten thousand French killed, of whom seven or eight thousand were noble, and above a hundred of them princes, who had banners carried before them in the field. On the side of the English there were slain only the duke of York, the young earl of Suffolk, and if we may believe certain English historians, not above four knights, one esquire, and twenty-eight common soldiers. Some however, with more probability affirm, the English lost four hundred men."

return of her husband, was marked for an early grave; while the elder lady who bore that name, the subject of our memoir, lost this honourable title in a manner by no means to be regretted, the particulars of which remain to be related.

Among the visitors of condolence to the Lady Gwladys, was a young man of rank and wealth of a neighbouring house in Monmouthshire, who had also shared the perils and gained his title and laurels in the battle field of Agincourt, at the same time with her late husband and father; this was Sir William ab Thomas, lord of Rhaglan Castle. That gentleman was the son of the famous Thomas ab Gwilym, renowned in his day for his literary taste, extensive property, and princely encouragement of the bards and minstrels. The mother of Sir William was a lady of great amiability and considerable property, named Maud, the daughter of Sir John Morley, from whom he inherited the noble castle and lordship of Rhaglan. As an intimacy had existed between the families of Bredwardine and Rhaglan Castle previous to her husband's death, the merits of this gentleman were not unknown to the Lady Gwladys; nor did he come less recommended in being one of the heroes of Agincourt. Therefore it could be no matter of surprise to her contemporaries that soon after the expiration of the year of mourning, Sir William ab Thomas became the accepted suitor of the lady of our memoir; or in due course of time, that she was led by him, once more to the hymeneal altar.

A more appropriate union than this, could scarcely be conceived, even in the estimation of a censure-prone world—so apt, by the agency of its female members, to constitute itself a judge and dictator of what is right and wrong on such occasions, with a wonderful degree of indifference to tastes and feelings of the parties principally concerned! What greater mark of profound esteem for the memory of the departed could the lady have shown, than to have espoused the friend of her late husband—a surviving brother in arms of the fatal fight that widowed her! Perhaps it may be answered—to have continued a widow to the end of her days. But be it remembered, that her first marriage was at *an unusually early age*; and that although the mother of

five children, Gwladys was a young widow at the period of the battle of Agincourt; society therefore would be exacting too much, under those circumstances, to require the sacrifice of so much youth, beauty, and capacity to an ostentatious deedless widowhood, when active usefulness in the sphere of married life carried more commendation than good sense could possibly assign to the most devoted existence of unavailing mourning. On the part of the gentleman, the selection of the young widowed daughter of the renowned Sir David Gam, must have met the warm approbation of his friends, and the universal admiration of the public, among whom the newly married pair formed the centre of no small circle.

If the appropriateness of the match gave general satisfaction in the first instance, the superior manner in which the Lady Gwladys fulfilled the duties to which she was now called, as the elevated mistress of the celebrated Castle of Rhaglan, must have called forth a tribute of applause from all parties. A house so renowned for its princely hospitality under the auspices of its former representatives required no small degree of energy, taste, and talent, to transcend those earlier impressions of munificence, according to the more advanced state of civilization, and the increased opulence of this peculiar family. The noble gracefulness with which the Lady Gwladys fulfilled her stately and benevolent offices of entertaining her guests and assisting the needy and afflicted, met an apt illustrator in the person of her contemporary, the great poet of the day, Lewis Glyncothi. The productions of this bard, as noticed elsewhere, have thrown considerable light on the history of the age in which he flourished. It is somewhat remarkable that in two instances he compares this lady to her namesake Gwladys Ddu, the daughter of Prince Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, who, as the term "Ddu" imports, was a brunette; in contradistinction to which style of beauty he describes the lady of Rhaglan Castle as a brilliant being, "like the sun—the pavilion of light," implying a fair and radiant complexion, or as we should say in modern phraseology, *a blonde*. Elsewhere, in this poem *she is compared to the same lady for her aim and influence*



in protecting and encouraging the Welsh language, which doubtless in her time was undermined by the affectation of speaking "the language of the Saxons," patronized by the Welsh Agincourt worthies, who frequently entertained their English companions in arms, who gained their honours in the same field—a martial brotherhood which seems to have been stronger in affection than even their respective ties of nationality. As a matter of some historical import we suggest the probability that the first strong stand which the English tongue made in Monmouthshire was from the introduction and patronage of it by the party to which we have referred. Their partiality to English politics, their loyalty to the English king, their union to English brides, as well as the marriages of their Welsh heiresses to Englishmen, go far to prove our conjecture; and we may especially add, their strong opposition to Welsh nationality, as illustrated in the early career of Sir David Gam.

The second marriage of Gwladys was soon followed by that of her son Sir Roger Vaughan, who wooed and won for his second wife, the Lady Margaret, daughter of Lord James Audley, another of the heroes of Agincourt, and we may add, the descendant of a family long remarkable for its hostility to Welsh independence.\*

In the elegy on the lady of our memoir, by Lewis Glyn-cothi, her state of worldly felicity is particularly emphasised, where she is designated "the star of Abergavenny—Gwladys the happy and the faultless." Thus it appears she was fully as comfortable, to use a homely but expressive phrase, as the lady of Rhaglan Castle as she was formerly, when mistress of Bredwardine; while both her affluence and her sphere of active usefulness were exhibited on a more enlarged scale, and wider arena.

By her second union Gwladys became the mother of three sons and five daughters. The two elder sons were the celebrated William Herbert, who in after time became earl of Pembroke, and Richard, afterwards known as the

\* This nobleman was slain in the battle of Bloreheath, in the year 1458. For a further account of this family see our memoir of the "Lady Emma," wife of Griffith ab Madoc.



After a long season of domestic felicity the happiness of the Lady Gwladys was at length disturbed by a most untoward event—that severe calamity the death of her indulgent and beloved husband Sir William ab Thomas. He died in the year 1446, deeply regretted by his family and a large circle of friends; and was buried in the Priory church, Abergavenny.

Happily for the lady of this memoir, it was not her lot to experience further any of those severe visitations that make human existence a state of endurance; she survived her husband eight years, and died in 1454, a year memorable in English annals for the commencement of active hostilities between the factions who had so long menaced each other with destruction—those disastrous civil contentions the wars of the Roses.\* Well was it for her that her existence was not further prolonged, to have experienced the sad reverses which brought mourning and desolation over the joyous circle of her domestic hearth. Well was it for her that the shadows of death had fallen on her eyes, rather than they should have encountered the bloody and petrifying spectacle of the headless trunks of her sons William and Richard, and the mangled gory remains of her elder son Thomas, the victims of that battle, so fatal to Wales and Welshmen.†

Gwladys was buried in the Priory church of Abergavenny, within the same tomb where the remains of her late husband were deposited eight years before.

Never perhaps was a funeral in Wales more numerously or more respectably attended than that of the lady Gwladys. The spontaneous assemblage of three thousand persons, inhabitants of the counties of Monmouth and Brecon, issuing at once from every nook of their respective districts, all attired in mourning habits, meeting at the bereft dwelling of their late friend or patroness—must have presented a

\* It was in 1454 that Richard duke of York took the field, having previously stirred up the insurrection of the Kentish men, under Jack Cade, and thus commenced the civil war.

† For these particulars see memoirs of Ellen Gettin.

striking spectacle of real mourners, and grateful followers to her last home of the lamented personage who had left a void in society, impossible to be filled up by a successor equally worthy.

The elegy to her memory, by Lewis Glyncothi, so frequently adverted to, is supposed to have been produced within the year and soon after her decease. As a composition, it is less remarkable for tender touches of pathos than for the descriptive powers of the poet. In this production he laments the death of Gwladys, whom he poetically styles the star of Abergavenny, the daughter of Sir David Gam, the strength of Gwent and the land of Brychan. Her piety and ancient descent, (twin virtues in Cambrian estimation,) are particularly dwelt upon. She is compared to Marsia, queen of Cyhelyn,\* remarkable it seems for her discretion and extensive influence as well as the great age at which she died; and to Gwladys Ddu, the daughter of Llewelyn ab Iorwerth, and ancestress to the head of the house of York, who in her children's time became king Edward IV., for the imputation of similar virtues. The bard concludes with a minute description of her very elaborately decorated tomb, which must have tasked the ingenuity and inventive powers of the artist even more than the descriptive capabilities of the poet. But time has mocked both them and the lady whom these trophies were intended to honour, affording a triumph to poetry at the expense of sculpture: and were it not for the explanatory verses of Lewis Glyncothi we should be utterly at a loss to comprehend the meaning of the mass of wreck, so intricate and confused, as is displayed in the mutilated alabaster figures, which formed the component portions of an interesting allegory, on the white monument of the benevolent Lady Gwladys of Rhaglan castle.†

\* Marsia queen of Cuhelyn the 24th king of Britain according to Jeffrey of Monmouth.

† The reader who may wish to read these Memoirs in chronological order is informed that the next successive biography to this is Ellen Gethin; to be followed by the life of Gwenhwyvar and "the old woman of Anglesea."

Hay in one night, means that she collected or rather extorted from her tenants a sum sufficient for the purpose in a very short time; and adds, "it is very extraordinary what could have procured Maud this more than mortal celebrity." She was no doubt a woman of masculine understanding and spirit, yet her exploits in Breconshire, where she is so famous, are not detailed either by history or tradition, except in the absurd tale just related. King John in his declaration against William de Breos, seems to hint pretty clearly that the grey mare was the better horse; and it is evident whatever her merits or demerits may have been, that she had considerable interest and influence in this county, as her name, though corrupted, is familiar to every peasant, while her husband's is unknown, or known only to be detested.

The rest of Maud de Haia's life is entirely free from the alloy of fable, and may be said to be purely historical. But as the records of her are so interwoven with the life of her atrocious husband, that as the latter is very eventful it is necessary to give both together. On the death of his brother Philip, without issue, his immense property in Ireland fell to the already wealthy William de Breos. "While he dwelt at the castle of Abergavenny," Theophilus Jones says, "he and his murdering ministers involved themselves in such a scene of butchery, as, fortunately for mankind, has seldom been paralleled.

Pity, like a new born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim horsed  
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye."

And while it is with pain the historian records this tale of blood, he may, perhaps, be pardoned if he expresses a satisfaction in consigning the memory of this hypocritical villain to perpetual infamy.

About five years previous to this time the castle of Abergavenny had been delivered by the treachery of the officers of the king of England into the hands of Nitsyllt ab Dyrenwald and Ienan ab Ririd, two noblemen of Gwent,

after which a warfare ensued between them and Henry II., was terminated in the year 1176, the castle restored to William de Breos, and Sitsyllt, as the associate of Ririd, received the king's pardon, through the intercession of Rhys ab Griffith, lord of Dinas-vawr. It was to congratulate Rhys upon this reconciliation, according to Powell and the Welsh chronicles, though Lord Lyttleton says it was to notify to Sitsyllt and his adherents an act of the English parliament prohibiting from wearing arms, or offensive weapons, that they became the guests of William de Breos, at his castle of Abergavenny. At first they were treated with the hospitality they expected; but in the midst of their conviviality their host, either from a design to provoke a quarrel, or in obedience to the instructions of his master, the king of England, made them the degrading proposal of surrendering their weapons, and submitting, without the power of defence, to his will. To this the Britons with indignation refused to accede; whereupon the assassin gave the signal to his myrmidons, who rushing into the room like incarnate demons, butchered the unsuspecting and unarmed Welshmen to a man. Not satisfied with this, they accompanied their employer to Sitsyllt's house in the neighbourhood of Abergavenny,\* where taking his wife prisoner, they murdered her son Cadwalader before her face, and set fire to the mansion. Lord Lyttleton mentions this horrid transaction with great coolness of temper, without even expressing his indignation at the dreadful scene, though he seems to be rather surprised that Henry II. did not notice it; while Giraldus Cambrensis hints that it was perpetrated by the orders of the English monarch. But the measure of this monster's iniquity was not yet full, though he never afterwards had an opportunity of converting his castle into a slaughter house and murdering *en masse*. About the year 1198 we find him using the same artful and nefarious stratagem to entrap a chieftain of Breconshire, against whom he entertained a secret

\* This house is on the grounds of Sir Benjamin Hall, near his noble mansion of Elnover; an interesting relic of ancient times, and a stern memorial of the deeds of blood here transacted and above recorded.

grudge. Trahaern Vychan, lord of Llangorse, was invited to meet him, to confer in a friendly manner on business. Unsuspicious of treachery, and, of course, unprepared for defence, the descendant of Caradoc of the brawny arm instantly determined to attend to the request, or obey the command of his powerful neighbour and superior. While on the journey he was met on the road by William de Breos, not far from Brecon, who ordered his bloodhounds to seize him. By his commands they tied him to a horse's tail, and in that situation ignominiously and cruelly dragged him through the streets of Brecon; after which he had him beheaded, and suspended upon a gallows for three days.

Repeated acts of cruelty, tyranny, and oppression, will make even cowards brave. How wild and implacable then must have been the resentment of the Welsh, a people brave and irascible, bred upon their mountains, the indigenous children of Freedom? The castle of Abergavenny was unable to withstand the fury of the men of Gwent, who levelled it with the ground; and the whole garrison left there by De Breos were either killed or taken prisoners. They next assailed the fortress of Dingatston, near Monmouth, belonging to one of his partizans, and reduced it to a heap of ashes. Upon the assassination of Trahaern, Gwenwynwyn, prince of Powys, who was connected with his family by marriage, determined to avenge that chieftain's death. Accordingly, with a strong army he entered into Elvel, in Radnorshire, and laid siege to Painscastle in that district, then the property of William de Breos. Gwenwynwyn vowed that he would reduce to ashes the whole country from thence to the Severn; a sacrifice, as he conceived, too small to the manes of his butchered kinsman. Gwenwynwyn, however, was not successful; the want of miners, and the insufficiency of his implements of attack, delayed his operations till the besieged were reinforced by troops from England; added to which Griffith ab Rhys, lord of South Wales, joined the English against him. A most bloody engagement took place, in which the prince of Powys was defeated. Mathew Paris says, this battle was fought before Maud's Castle, called



by Camden the castle of Matilda in Colwen; and he tells us that three thousand seven hundred Welshmen fell in that combat. Thus escaped, for a while, the cruel and oppressive lord of Brecknock; but short-lived was his triumph.

We next find him a prisoner to King John, in the year 1202; while, strange to say, supporting the righteous cause of young Arthur, the lawful heir to the crown. From this imprisonment the usurper John soon released him; but ever after continued suspicious of him, though he loaded him with favours during the first four or five years of his reign. Upon the breaking out of the war between John and his barons, the king demanded the children of De Breos as hostages for his fidelity. Upon this occasion his wife, Maud de Haia, whom some of our chroniclers call a *malapert woman*, desired the king's messengers who made the application, to inform their master that she would not trust her children to one who had murdered his own nephew. This answer, which was more spirited than prudent, so enraged the king that her husband was instantly banished the realm, and his property declared confiscated for the use of the crown.

Theophilus Jones has here presented us with a valuable document containing the complaints of John against William de Breos, which, he observes, as they were never contradicted, there is no reason to disbelieve. This is the more interesting as it places that unpopular king in the light of an injured party, and truly merciful amidst the most galling provocations to severity; such, indeed, as no landlord in ordinary life would endure from a shuffling dishonest tenant; nor under such circumstances, extend to him half the indulgences accorded by King John. Jones says, "as the memorial is in fact a history of the latter years of this baron's life, I trust no apology is necessary for its insertion here nearly at length, or, at least, preserving the whole of its material points. The first grievance recited by the king is, that William owed him on his (John's) departure for Normandy five thousand marks for the province of Munster, *demised to him by the crown*, for which he paid no rent for

five years. He also owed five years' rent for the city of Limerick; of this sum he only paid or *accommodated* the king with a hundred pounds at Rouen on account. As to the debt due for Munster, several terms were assigned on which he was required to pay it, yet he neglected to attend to them. Wherefore, after five years' neglect of payment, according to the custom of England and the law of the exchequer, it was resolved that his goods should be distrained, until he made satisfaction for his debt to the crown. But the delinquent having by some means obtained information of what was intended, caused all his property to be removed out of the way, so that no effects could be found upon which the distress could be made. Orders were, therefore, sent to Gerard de Athiis, the king's bailiff in Wales, that William's goods and chattels in that country should be distrained till the debt was paid. Alarmed at this determination, his wife, Matilda de Haia, his nephew, William Earl Ferrars, Adam de Porter, who married his sister, and many of his friends met the king at Gloucester, and requested that William might be permitted to have an interview with his majesty; who coming to Herfeord in the mean time, received possession from De Breos of his castles of Hay, Brecknock, and Radnor; to be held by the crown, unless the debt was paid on a day appointed by himself. And besides, as hostages for his punctuality, he delivered up to the king two sons of William de Breos the younger, a son of Reginald de Breos, and four sons of his tenants. Yet, notwithstanding this, he paid no more attention to the present than to his former engagements; for in a little while afterwards, when Gerard de Athiis commanded the constables of the castles surrendered by De Breos to the king, to collect the customary payment for the use of the crown, finding that the officers to whom the care and custody of those forts had been committed were then absent, he came with William de Breos the younger, Reginald and their sons, and a vast multitude of people, and laid siege to those three fortresses in one day. And though he did not meet with the success he expected, yet he burnt one half of the town of Leominster, a cell belonging to the abbey of

Reading, held under the crown in free alms, and wounded and slew most of the king's ministers there. When Gerard de Athiis heard this, having collected together as many of the king's subjects as the time would permit, he marched to the relief of the besieged places; whereupon William de Breos instantly retreated, and fled into Ireland with his wife and family. There they were hospitably received by William Marshal and Walter de Laci, although both of them had been commanded, on their allegiance, not to entertain or maintain the enemies of the king of England, who might fly thither to avoid payment of the debts due to their sovereign. Afterwards they sent to the king, and undertook that William should appear before him on a certain day, to answer for his debt and the outrages he had committed; and in case of his neglecting so to do, they engaged to send him out of Ireland, and never to receive him again; yet neither he nor they kept their word. It was now determined no longer to suffer these excesses with impunity; and the king having collected his army, resolved to embark for Ireland to punish his rebellious subjects. But before his majesty could reach the place of his destination, William de Breos went to the king's bailiff in Ireland and petitioned for letters of safe conduct to enable him to make his peace with his lawful sovereign. These were granted, on his being sworn to proceed without loss of time to meet the king, without any circuitry in his route, or turning out of his road either to the right or left. Yet, when he arrived in England, as his family were then in Ireland, he immediately proceeded to Herefordshire, and collected as many of the king's enemies as he could prevail upon to join his standard, and to espouse his quarrel. When the king heard this, in the course of his voyage, being then upon the Irish sea, he determined to come on shore at Pembroke. Here he was again solicited by De Breos's nephew, William, Earl Ferrars, that he might be permitted to speak to his uncle, to know his intentions. This was likewise granted, and one Robert de Burgate, a knight of the household, directed to accompany him, who returning, begged leave that William de Breos might once more be



suffered to approach the royal presence, which was allowed him. He then came as far as the water of Pembroke (Milford Haven), and offered by his messengers forty thousand marks to be restored unto peace and favour. "Yet we," says John, "knew full well that it is not in *his* power, but his *wife's*, who was in Ireland, to satisfy the debt due to us; and, therefore, we sent to inform him that we were about to sail for Ireland, and that if he was in earnest, we would accompany and supply him with a safe conduct or passport for that kingdom, to enable him to talk to his wife and friends about the amount of the fine he was to pay, and the ratification of the terms to be agreed upon. And we further undertook, that if we could not agree upon those terms, we would send him to the same spot in Wales on which he then stood, and in the same condition." These reasonable proposals were rejected by De Breos, who remained in the principality doing all the mischief he could to the king and his subjects: gratifying his malignity by burning a mill and setting fire to three cottages.

In the meantime, Maud de Haia hearing of the king's expedition to Ireland, fled to Scotland, where she was taken prisoner by Duncan de Caryc, whom the king called his cousin and friend, and who immediately sent him information of this occurrence, which he received on the day the castle of Carrickfergus was surrendered to him. Maud's eldest son, William, his wife and two sons, and her daughter Maud, were also made prisoners at the same time; but Hugh de Laci and Reginald de Breos, her third son, made their escape. To conduct them into his presence John sent two of his knights, John de Courci and Godfrey de Cracombe, with a company of bowmen, and when they were brought before him, "*this very Maud*," says John, "began to talk about making us satisfaction, and offered us forty thousand marks for the safety and preservation of the lives and limbs of her husband and his adherents, and that his castles might be restored to him. To this we agreed, yet in three days she repented of her engagement, alleging that she was unable to perform them. Afterwards when we returned into England, we brought her and her family with

us in our custody ; and now she again offered us forty thousand marks, upon the same conditions as formerly, and ten thousand marks as a fine for her departure from her first proposal. This we likewise consented to accept, but to convince her that she was to adhere more steadily to her undertakings in future, we told her that as often as she receded from the present compact, she should pay an additional sum of ten thousand marks. To this she agreed, and the whole transaction was reduced into writing, and confirmed and ratified by her oath and seal, and the oaths and seals of her party, as well as of our earls and barons who were present at the treaty ; and days were at the same time assigned for the payment thereof. For the punctual performance of which, she and hers were to remain in custody until the whole debt was paid by instalments."

The king then proceeds to state, that after William de Breos's breach of his engagements he entered Herefordshire, and burnt and laid waste the country ; he was proclaimed a traitor and an outlaw by the sheriff of Herefordshire, according to the law and custom of England ; but that upon the faith of this compact with his wife, he (the king) wrote to that officer to postpone further proceedings against him till the sovereign's return from Ireland. That upon his arrival in England, Maud and her family were prisoners in Bristol, where she petitioned that her husband might have leave to speak with her in private ; that he obtained this permission, that he approved of the terms his wife had made, and that in order to enable him to raise the money promised to be paid, Geoffrey Fitzpeter, the king's justice, was sent to accompany him (a favour with which De Breos would have readily dispensed ; for upon the first instalment becoming due, he quitted the kingdom and left his majesty's justice in the lurch). The rescript then concludes by saying that upon being informed of this unexpected piece of intelligence, the king sent Geoffrey Fitzpeter, the king's brother, the earl of Salisbury, the earl of Winchester, and other noblemen, to Maud de Haia to know from her what was to be done in this dilemma, and what she and her husband proposed to do in the business.



Maud now completely driven into a corner from which there was no further chance of escape by shuffling or prevarication, turned a bold virago face upon the matter, and put his majesty and his claims to defiance. She answered explicitly enough *that she would not pay one farthing*; that she had no more money or money's worth in her possession than twenty-four marks in silver, twenty-four besants,\* and eleven ounces of gold. Thus neither Maud de Haia nor her husband, nor any person for them, ever paid the debt to the king, or any part of it. This writing is attested by William, Earl Ferrars, Henry, earl of Hereford, and several other noblemen, so that there can be no doubt of the correctness of the whole statement; so that John was fully justified in his proceedings against William de Breos, independently of the *malapert* speech of his wife, which at the same time he neither forgot nor forgave; but nothing could justify the horrid revenge of King John when he sealed the doom of this worthless woman. He had her and her eldest son William, the latter a father of a family, enclosed in a tower (built round them!) at Windsor, where they were inhumanly starved to death.

William de Breos was compelled to seek a refuge in France, and to submit to the loss of the whole of his property and possessions: in this country he survived some time in the humiliating habit of a beggar; tormented by a wounded conscience and the galling miseries of poverty. He died at Corboyl, in Normandy, on the 9th of August, in the year 1212, from whence his body was conveyed to Paris; and, according to Stowe and Matthew Paris, *honourably* interred there, in the abbey of St. Victor. Theophilus Jones thus concludes his history. "It is not necessary to paint the character of this monster, his own actions have unequivocally portrayed it; but is it not extraordinary that such a man as Giraldus Cambrensis should from any motives have been induced to become his panegyrist, or to

\* Besants, or rather Byzants, from their having been coined at Byzantium, during the time of the christian emperors, were a gold coin of uncertain value. Besants are now only known in heraldry, and are represented by little round yellow balls or surfaces. — *History of Brecon*, vol. i., p. 121.

prostitute his pen in his defence? Yet so it is, for he tells us that, though as a man he sometimes erred, for he who sins not has more of the divine than of human nature in him; yet he always prefaced his discourse with the name of the Lord; 'in God's name be *this* done\*—in God's name be *that* performed—if it please God—if it is the will of God—or by the grace of God it shall be so.' And if he was upon a journey, whenever he came into a church, or saw a cross, he immediately betook himself to prayers, even though he was engaged at the time in conversation with any person, whether rich or poor. And when he met children he always saluted them, hoping to be repaid by the prayers of the innocents." Giraldus is equally unscrupulous in praising his wife Maud. He tells us, she was not only chaste but *prudent*, and remarkable for her economy and domestic good qualities. But though the archdeacon was a man of learning and knowledge of the world, he was a high churchman, and the most meritorious service that could be rendered religion, or could buy the good word of a priest, was a liberal contribution towards the support of the clergy. William de Breos's liberal donations towards churches, abbeys, monks, and friars, detailed at large by Theophilus Jones, may well account for Giraldus's respect for such a villain.

In her dire extremity, with death in her eye and horror at her heart, Maud was doubtless prodigal of great promises to the king to save her life, while preparations for her eternal incarceration were going on; but too fully convinced of her duplicity, and with hatred rankling in his bosom, he would not forego his revenge, which he satiated to the utmost. Speed says, Maud endeavoured to pacify the king; and to induce him to forgive her offence she made a present to his queen of four hundred kine and one bull, all milk white, with red ears. Bingley, in his animal biography, describes wild cattle to be *invariably* white, the muzzle black, and the whole inside of the ear, and one third part of the outward, from the tip downwards, red.

\* Theophilus Jones says, "It is to be presumed that this grace preceded the slaughter at Abergavenny; 'In God's name let us cut the throats of these fellows peaceably and quietly.'"

After this select specimen of a Norman Baron and Baroneis it will not be out of place here to notice the origin of this highly vaunted race, these ruthless disturbers of the world, the Normans, from whom mankind have derived so little good and so much evil.

The Normans were originally Norwegian pirates and free-booters. They made their first irruptions on the French coasts about the year 700, when they so ransacked and plagued the maritime towns that, considering them in the light of the direct evils of humanity, it was inserted in the Litany "From plague, pestilence, and the fury of the Normans, good Lord deliver us !" To avert their malignity and give them a chance of becoming civilized, Charles the Bold king of France gave them a portion of the province of Neustria, where they settled, and named their new country Normandy, signifying the land of the Northmen. Their first sovereign Duke was Rollo, A.D. 900, from whom in a direct line came the sixth of their Dukes, William the Bastard, conqueror of England, A.D. 1067.

With the exception of those nobles of England who derive their origin from Welsh or Saxon progenitors, the haughtiest of the English aristocracy are not only content, but proud to date their ancestry from the coming of the Norman conqueror, and their descent from his various followers, as if the boast of Norman blood in their veins gave them claims to a superiority over the rest of their fellow subjects. As so many have proudly plumed themselves with this blood-red feather in their caps of vanity, and as certain writers have lauded the Normans as the noblest specimen of the human race, it may not be amiss to examine how far they have fairly won such pre-eminent distinction.

In noticing the expulsion of the Normans from their castles in Wales, Theophilus Jones remarks :—"At a place called Aberllech in Monmouthshire, the Welsh again triumphed, and satiated their revenge in the blood of their late masters ; so that for some time no safety remained for those Normans who continued in the country, but such as their stone walls and castles afforded them. Within these strongholds they lived alternately in a state of gloomy

grandeur and sulky silence, or brutal inebriety; and from thence they occasionally sallied forth in large bodies, to desolate the country, and plunder the inhabitants: depending, like other beasts of prey, chiefly upon the success of these kinds of expeditions, for provisions."

In a respectable periodical of the day we have the following just estimate of the merits of the Normans:—"Perhaps there is not agog any greater nonsense among clever people than there is about race. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton is all for the Normans, as splendid fellows. With far more reason Mr. Disraeli is wild for the Jews, as the race who have done the greatest things in the History of man. In reference to the Normans, we have read all Sir Edward has ever said in their favour and nothing remains except that they have made themselves the Feudal Aristocracy of Europe. But as we regard Feudalism as a barbarous institution, without a single particle of civilization or beneficence in it, there is nothing noble, to our eyes, in such an achievement. From first to last, Feudalism has been the enemy of all goodness, and of all truth; and all the best servants of mankind have been at war with it. Feudal aristocracy, from the days of the conquest to the repeal of the corn-laws, has in England been an organization of rapacity and a source of crime in society. The Norman castles are mouldering everywhere, and are not in a more dilapidated condition than the institution of which they are a portion and a symbol. There is nothing but strength defending rapacity in the meaning of these castles; they were not sources of light to guide, nor of love to sweeten the dark and bitter lot of man. They were a magnificent organization of the Dick Turpins and the Claudes du Val of the middle ages, and nothing more—these proud Norman lords, on whose genealogies Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton is so eloquent. The greatest things of English civilization have all been done by men of Saxon names. A Caxton introduced printing. A Wycliffe and a Knox did the best part of the work of reformation. A Bacon expounded the method of experimental philosophy. In the poetic art, a Milton and a Shakspeare have made all the Normans that ever rhymed poetasters in comparison. A Cromwell established religious

liberty ; and a Watt built the steam engine ; and when in the last generation the French had subdued the most of Europe, they were beaten on the behalf of England by a Wellesley on the land, and a Nelson on the Sea. Statesmanship would seem to be a field in which the Normans had peculiar advantages, yet the superiority of the men of Saxon names has been manifest, in almost every generation, from Thomas à Becket to Robert Peel."



## MISTRESS\* TREVOR HANMER.

DAUGHTER OF SIR THOS. HANMER, BART., OF HANMER HALL, FLINTSHIRE; AFTERWARDS LADY WARNER, WIFE OF SIR JOHN WARNER, BART.; AND LATERLY SISTER TERESA CLARE, NUN OF THE ORDER OF THE POOR CLARES OF GRAVELING, IN DUNKIRK.

PENNANT, in his notice of the paintings at Bettisfield, gives the following very amusing account of this lady, while referring to her mother's and her own characteristic portrait in that interesting collection. "In one room is an elegant figure of Lady Hanmer, with a forehead cloth, in an elegant white undress, studying Gerard's Herbal; and a *small portrait of a Lady Warner, 'a la Magdalene,' with long dishevelled hair, and a skull in her hand.* She was a daughter of the House (of Hanmer), and wife to Sir John Warner; who not content with abjuring the religion of their parents, determined to quit the kingdom, and embrace the monastic life. Their friends applied to the king (Charles II.) to divert them from their resolution. His Majesty, with his usual wicked wit told them that if Sir John had a mind to make himself *one of God Almighty's fools*, they must have patience.

"Sir John became a Jesuit, and assumed the name of Brother Clare. His wife (the lady of the picture), became a poor Sister Clare, of which order she performed the noviciateship with *marvellous and very literal obedience!* 'I am black but comely,' was the text of the preacher, one day, whilst exhorting her, in what is called a cloathing sermon, to humility; expressing that she must make herself black (alluding to the Nunnery habit of that order,) in the eyes of

\* "Mistress," was the style of address of spinsters of rank, and single ladies generally, previous to the reign of King Charles II., at whose court "Miss" is supposed to have originated, as a substitute for Mistress. The latter term, however, was kept up long after, until modish people, in the times of the *Spectator*, came to consider it antiquated, when it gradually fell into disuse, and "Miss," in the course of time, became general.

the world, to become fair in the eyes of the Lord. The Abbess, on this, said to the poor Novice, 'you also, Sister Clare, *must black yourself*;' on which she went instantly into the kitchen, where she blacked her face and hands *with the soot of the chimney*; and thus became an instructive example to the admiring sisters!"

This brief account of Pennant's, concluding with what appeared too good a jest to be really true (although it ultimately proved so), excited the curiosity of the Editor of this Work: and the temptation of adding such a rarity as the life of a Welsh Nun to these Female Worthies of multifarious rank and conditions of women, was powerful with him. In London he sought out the "Life of Lady Warner," referred to in a note to Pennant's Tour in Wales, said to be in our glorious national collection in the British Museum. Owing to the erroneous manner in which this old but scarce volume was originally placed in the catalogue, the officers of the Museum found some difficulty in discovering it; and it was only after repeated applications, daily made, that he induced an earnest search to be made for it till found.\* From that work we learn the following particulars of this lady's life, reduced to plain common sense, from the very wordy and over-wrought eulogistic style of her Roman Catholic biographer.

Trevor Hanmer was born on the 20th of April, 1636, at Hanmer Hall, in Flintshire, North Wales, the seat of the ancient family whose name she bears. She received the Christian name of Trevor in baptism from my lord Baron Trevor who became her godfather. Her father was Sir Thomas Hanmer, Baronet; the long-proved fidelity and loyalty of his family procured for him in early life the honourable office of cup-bearer to King Charles I. Her mother was Mistress Elizabeth Baker, of the ancient family

\* This volume contains the "Life of Thomas Walsh," the "Life of Lady Warner," the "Life of Lady Elizabeth Warner," and the "Life of George Webb, Bishop of Limerick." It is lettered on the back, "Biography W., Part I." As Lady Warner's is the only important "Life" in the book, and with the memoir of her sister-in-law occupies about half of the volume, we would suggest that it should be re-bound, and lettered "Lady Warner, &c., &c."

policy, productive at the time, it is true, of calamities that may be deplored, and outrages which must be condemned, yet ultimately tending to promote the peace and happiness of both countries, suggested to this enterprising monarch the necessity of uniting Wales with England, and the hatred of a rival in arms, as well as in talents, though inferior in force and extent of dominions, confirmed him in his determination. Llewelyn ab Griffith had frequently, and indeed recently, foiled him in his attempts to subjugate the rough native of the barren mountains, and had formerly sent him bootless back to the fat pastures of England, if not with disgrace at least with mortification and disappointment; but that persevering potentate, skilled as he was in every branch of military tactics then known in Europe or in Asia, returned to the charge, and deaf to the representatives of the illfated Llewelyn, sent the primate back with proposals so humiliating, that they were (as he of course concluded they would be,) rejected with indignation. One of these proposals was, that the prince of Wales should desert his subjects, and submit to receive a pension of one thousand pounds a year in England. Llewelyn answered with great spirit, that if he were base enough to accept of it such was the honest pride of his people, that they would not suffer him to enjoy it, or permit him to descend so far below his rank. Here the archbishop, whose conduct hitherto was so amiable, lost at once the high character he had acquired. Intimidated by the power, or compelled by what perhaps he thought his duty to his sovereign, he not only condescended to convey terms which he knew to be unreasonable, and only calculated to wound the feelings of an injured prince, but he absolutely, when they were not approved of, thought it necessary to employ the censures of the church, and to send Llewelyn and all his adherents *to the devil*, for what he called their invincible obstinacy.

Both sides were prepared for war; the first efforts of the Welsh prince were successful: a considerable body of the English having crossed the strait,\* or narrow channel between Anglesea and Carnarvonshire were cut to pieces;

\* That arm of the sea called the Strait of Menai.

rejected Romanism and embraced the reformed Protestant religion. On the sensitive mind of a child these representations had their natural effect of causing the most pensive longings to be in the way of eternal happiness on one side, and on the other, the most unspeakable terrors of future torments. As it does not appear that the mind of this child had been by any means properly trained in Protestant principles, and armed by sound instruction to resist the insidious delusions of the proselytizing priests and their active agents, there is nothing to excite our surprise at the readiness with which, at her early age, she became a convert to a faith so artfully recommended. Her parents had been courtiers from early life, and it is probable, though nominally Protestants, were as far from being zealous votaries of the reformed religion as of entertaining a vindictive hatred to the ancient religion of their country. This tolerant disposition on their part, however, was not the result of generous principles, but literally from indifference to any religious impressions. This carelessness seems to have been the more characteristic of Sir Thomas than of his lady; although they both appear exceedingly culpable in suffering the mind of their child to be thus exposed to the artful workings of the deadliest enemies of their national faith—the notorious Jesuits. The principles on which monastic institutions have their being, are decidedly hostile to natural affection, as is proved in the following instance. So powerfully had the tender mind of Trevor Hanmer been worked upon, that at length she formed what her Catholic biographer calls “the romantic resolution of running away from her parents—and these Catholic children promised to accompany her—to enter the monastery of Mont-martyr, situate a little out of Paris; where her want of experience persuaded her (says the above quoted authority) she would be received as soon as she presented herself. But accidentally dropping her bundle as she passed through the house, her childish plot was discovered, and her design frustrated; and all the reward she received for her intended devotion was a severe correction from her lady mother, though then detained in bed by her last sickness.”



But although her design was prevented for the present, she still nursed the resolution of carrying it into effect at some future opportunity. To show how strongly the passion for becoming a Nun had already taken root in her mind, we are informed that the very play or pastimes of her childhood savoured of it. Thus, while other children amused themselves in more active or lively diversions, Trevor Hanmer found her choice entertainment in making little oratories, or places of prayer, and in imitating the religious ceremonies which she had seen practised in the Catholic Church which she visited with her young friends at Paris.

The death of her mother, Lady Hanmer, happened soon after, and Sir Thomas made up his mind to visit England, as well to see how affairs stood with his royal master, as the management of his own private concerns. Alarmed at length at his daughter's predilection for Roman Catholicism, previous to quitting Paris he removed her to the house of an ancient burgher and his wife who were Huguenots, and without children. Thus there were none to aid her in such a scheme as she formerly entertained; but how she amused herself, or what her views and feelings were, while dwelling with her new protectors, we are not informed.

While in England, Sir Thomas Hanmer, to avoid as much as possible the notice of the Parliamentarians, lived in great privacy at the house of his friend Sir Thomas Harvey, called Hengrave Hall near Bury in Sussex. While here, we are told that "moved by the beauty and excellent endowments of Mistress Susan Harvey, with the consent of her parents he wooed and won, and made her his second wife; and thus, though yet unknown to her, Trevor Hanmer had now a stepmother.

"Sir Thomas Hanmer's thoughts were either so taken up with his new mistress, or so distracted with the danger of those troublesome times, that he seemed almost to have forgotten his daughter, who had now been above a year in Paris without hearing from him or of him, insomuch that the people with whom she was believed him dead." Her conduct while thus circumstanced, an apparent orphan among strangers and in a strange land, must have been very



engaging. She won so much on the affection of her kind protectors, who, as before observed, were childless, that they were actually pleased at her apparently destitute condition, that they might enjoy the generous satisfaction of adopting her as their heiress; as they already "esteemed and loved her as their own child, and resolved, as far as in their power, to make her so." These generous sentiments in her favour are less to be wondered at, when we are assured that *such was her admirably sweet disposition that it won the hearts and affections of all who conversed with her.*

But whilst her protectors enjoyed these views, all their fond hopes were suddenly destroyed by the arrival of her father at Paris. Sir Thomas Hanmer came over expressly to take her with him to England. Thus, a most affectionate parting took place between her and her new friends.

On her return to England her father allowed her the choice either to accompany him and be presented to her step-mother, or to take up her residence with her grandmother, the Lady Hanmer, at Haughton, in Flintshire; and she gave preference to the latter.

However great her affection for her Huguenot friends, it would appear that she did not participate in their religious opinions; for, after her return to England she still nursed her darling infatuation—the one great passion of her soul—the lively hope and ardent desire of ultimately becoming a nun. Being discovered by her grandmother in the practices of certain formalities of Roman Catholicism, she made no secret of her religious bias, or of her desire to take the veil. The old lady, as we may suppose, greatly averse to her views, and alarmed at her sense of responsibility to her father, informed him by letter of all the circumstances.

Upon this information Sir Thomas Hanmer sent for her to Hengrave Hall, where she was received with all imaginable kindness by her step-mother, which she returned with what dutiful respect she was able.

With all the amiability ascribed to her, and she really appears to have deserved much of the praise so liberally bestowed by her Catholic biographer, a meek submission to

maternal authority does not find a place in the catalogue of her imputed virtues. In fact, her passion for the veil was at variance both with obedience to her natural protectors and to paternal affection. As before related, her mother, on her death-bed, found it necessary to inflict on her "a severe correction;" and her reluctance to meet the lady who had become her step-mother, and who, as subsequently proved, was as exemplary in that unpopular relationship as possible, appears in her perverse refusal to be introduced to her father's "second choice," and preferring to live with her grandmother. The above expression that she returned the "all possible kindness" of the second Lady Hanmer with *what dutiful respect and affection she was able*, certainly implies that her prejudices gave those feelings a very limited circulation. However, this lady, with her super-sublimated reputation for almost every possible Christian virtue, can well afford this slight drawback on her claims to absolute perfection; and the demands of truth really call for these comments. But the principles on which monastic institutions have their existence are altogether at variance with those of natural affection and filial obedience, as is amply proved in this instance. Here we have a young lady, yielding in early youth to the artful persuasions of designing priests and their agents, who is so far ready, willing, nay, vehemently anxious, to forsake the home of her childhood, with the tender associations of paternal affection, without a sigh or the slightest accompaniment of regret.

With very commendable consideration for her father's reduced circumstances, from the sequestration of his plentiful estate by the Parliamentarians, she told him she would dispense with the charges of keeping a servant. She had other, and as she considered, higher views in this arrangement than mere economy. By undergoing the fatigue of such domestic labours she practised a lesson of humility, and at the same time inured herself to such hardships as might prepare her for her future monastic capacity; which she had long determined should be her ultimate destination. Accordingly, some time after, when her father came in suddenly, he found her on her knees, assiduously scrubbing

the floor of her chamber, and perspiring with her laborious exertions. Without being aware of her secret object, Sir Thomas was greatly affected at what he considered such a touching instance of conforming herself to his reduced circumstances; "and taking her in his arms with tears in his eyes, he protested his belief that God would one day give her an especial blessing for conducting herself after so particular a manner, and so meekly yielding to those unhappy events which His providence and her kindness to himself had reduced her."

The national troubles as well as his own private inconveniences increasing, that his family might not be too troublesome to his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Hanmer determined on living altogether with his mother, wife, and daughter, at Haughton, where before he had only been an occasional visitor; but their residence there was of short duration, for Sir Thomas Harvey soon urged their return to his mansion of Hengrave Hall, which kind and seasonable invitation they immediately accepted.

Her father and step-mother having now left them, Trevor Hanmer was once more left with her grandmother, and now, in comparative solitude, she eagerly nursed her passion for the life of a nun. It was at this time that she commenced the practice of those mortifications which form so distinguishing a feature in the character of a Catholic devotee, as a prelude to any future austerities she might be called upon to exercise. She began to fast once a week, abstaining from meat and drink till night. She rose constantly at midnight to her prayers, and in the day-time, notwithstanding the expostulations of her wondering grandmother, exercised such labours and humble offices as are usually performed by a servant; and to evade the observations and discussions which such peculiarities might induce, she declared that she found them beneficial to her health.

Remarking on her general habits, her Catholic biographer says:—"She had her time hourly regulated, from morning till night, a method she began to practice before she left France, and never after omitted. She was so exceedingly industrious, that whatever she undertook she never failed to



accomplish." As a proof of her perseverance she learnt the French language without the aid of a master, and acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Italian and Spanish as "to understand any book."

After a prolonged visit at Hengrave Hall, we find Sir Thomas Hanmer and his lady at Lensham, where they had retired on account of its short distance from London; from thence they wrote to Trevor, to require her to join them. Agreeable to her usual promptitude, she immediately took her departure from Wales, and found her father alone at Lensham, Lady Hanmer not having arrived yet from Suffolk. The execution of King Charles, and the banishment of the Cavaliers, having now cast the deepest gloom on all the royalists, Sir Thomas was in a state of deep grief and despondency.

It was at this juncture, and while he was in this softened mood, that she resolved on using her endeavours to bring the subject of her long-nursed desires to a close, and gain her father's consent to allow her to go to France and take the veil; "where," as her Catholic biographer expresses it, "she might live securely and die happy." With all the energy and pertinacity of her character she urged her suit, and emphatically pointed out the difficulties of his own situation and his inability to provide for her; all which solicitude on her account would cease by yielding to her well-weighed desires on this point. Sir Thomas, who seems to have been an easy-going compound of country gentleman and cavalier, and "a Protestant according to act of parliament" only, therefore anything but a bigot; entertaining neither a violent antipathy to Catholicism nor great zeal for the Protestant cause, considering her reasons, as much as he understood of them, very solid and convincing, found little difficulty in giving his consent, which Trevor received with heartfelt thankfulness.

The Jesuit Father Hanmer being consulted, advised her to go to Paris and enter into a monastery of the order of St. Bennet, to which he gave her the necessary recommendations. The good father took care to inform her what dower was essential for becoming a bride of the church,

which her parent readily agreed to provide. Thus everything now appeared settled to the satisfaction of all parties, and even a day was fixed upon for their departure from England.

However, as the homely proverb goes, "there is many a slip between the cup and the lip;" when Lady Hanmer arrived, and heard of these arrangements, she protested against them with earnest warmth; and certainly adduced powerful reasons why Sir Thomas ought never to have given his consent; but having inconsiderately yielded it, why he ought to recal it.

She pleaded that in allowing his only daughter to become a member of the Church of Rome, and a nun, he would take an irretrievable step towards the disgrace and utter ruin of his family; that to herself personally, it would be bitterly injurious. The world would readily infer that it was her unkindness which drove his daughter into the inclosure of a nunnery, to seek that peace which she could not find at home. That the governing party in England would consider such a decision a proof that he was himself a Papist at heart, and thus expose them all to greater difficulties and sorrows than they now endured; and they were at present persecuted no less for their religion than their loyalty.

Poor Sir Thomas, who had previously acknowledged the powerful reasons put forth by his daughter, now saw more cogent arguments adduced by his lady; especially those points which represented his danger of person and property from the resentment of the government. He, therefore, recalled the consent which he had given his daughter, and declared that under his present view of things, it was impossible for him to furnish her with the pecuniary means for putting her desires into execution.

Trevor Hanmer at first felt this disappointment as all ardent minds endure the thwarting of a darling scheme; but so far from yielding it up in despair, from the difficulties which entrenched her object, she seemed to consider it only as postponed for a time, to be resumed at a more favourable season. Besides, her cast of mind was formed on the principles of intense perseverance, long-suffering, and self-denial.



embracing the beau-ideal of mental and corporeal martyrdom as the noblest objects of human aspiration. Thus, the temporary opposition which partially turned aside the direct points of her onward course, served only to dart the roots of her resolution into a deeper soil, to be nursed and invigorated by the very delay which at first she was inclined to deprecate. She submitted in silence to the force of these adverse circumstances, living quietly with her father and his lady at Lensham, for the period of a year; where she led much the same sort of life and practised similar austerities as at Haughton. At the close of their year at Lensham, the family once more removed, probably on another visit to Sir Thomas Harvey, in Suffolk; and Trevor, to whom the gaieties of the affluent were far from pleasing, went to live with Mrs. Illis, a relation of the family, at Halrhey, in Wales; there she brought with her, as a companion, her cousin, Mistress Catherine Kinnaston.

At this period of her life, her former editor remarks;—“A fire which is smothered for a time seldom fails of breaking out afresh, yea, rather seems by imprisonment to gain force and strength; and so it happened with this young lady, who being more mature than formerly, she thought upon the most probable means of enabling her to effect her desires.” It would somewhat puzzle the reader were he put to guess her next step towards their achievement, as her plan was as singular as ever entered the head of a baffled devotee, or rather of an obstructed woman, fully resolved by any means on the ultimate attainment of her end. It was neither more nor less than entering into trade, and on a limited scale becoming a maltster. It seems her father's embarrassments at this time were so great, that he found himself unable to give her a sufficient annual allowance to uphold her respectability in society, according to which she was born and educated. “She took this pretence to beg leave that she might buy barley, and get it made into malt, to sell it to his own tenants; by the profits of which she hoped to augment her allowance to a competency for her maintenance after such a manner as became his daughter.” This plausible *pretence*, however, involved a certain degree of dupli-

city, which in a lady of such reputed sanctity, appears difficult to reconcile with the purity of truth. But as she was now working her way towards a party proverbially famous for overlooking the means, so that the end redounded to the glory of their church, her Papistical biographer by no means reprehends, although he witnesses and even applauded the fact. He thus adds to the last quoted passage :—" shewing thereby her humility, to submit herself to so base and sordid a means to compass so glorious an end as she aimed at ; pleasing her imagination with the hopes that by her good housewifery, (and *success in the malt trade !*) to make up the sum which Father Hanmer informed her would be necessary for obtaining admission into a nunnery.

As his lady was not at hand to interfere, or alarm him with her probable *veto*, Sir Thomas found it more convenient to allow his daughter to become an amateur maltster, to traffic in barley and malt, however repugnant to his aristocratic pride, than to add to her income. However, in giving his consent he circumscribed her dealings, and stipulated, that she was to sell her malt only to his own tenants. This singular malting scheme for raising the wind, and bringing grist to the mill of monkery utterly failed ; partly, it is said, from the poverty of the people to whom she gave credit, and partly from their dishonesty ; but principally, we should surmise, from the ignorance of the lady maltstress, of the reputable trade in which she was not adapted to shine which doubtless required a peculiar talent to succeed in, as well as the visionary calling she was so madly anxious to assume. " Even with this failure," says her admiring first biographer, " she hoped against hope," and formed the resolution that come what might, she would never marry, that she might not thereby incapacitate herself for the happiness so earnestly desired. Even in this resolution she was destined to a failure, and to *endure* the felicities of conjugal bliss, previous to the attainment of her grand desideratum—doubtless another thorn in her probationary crown—but which to mortals walking by the light of mere common sense, it would appear like marching through the delectable regions of Paradise into the Popish glooms of

Purgatory; or frantically departing from the honoured and reputable paths of usefulness and peace, into the questionable and briary labyrinths of fanaticism and self-inflicting torments. But we are anticipating, and reflecting on events yet to be recorded.

At this time Cromwell's power appeared to be fixed on a firm basis, therefore as his uneasiness respecting the plots, cabals, and intrigues of the ever-restless royalists abated, his severities against the cavaliers considerably relaxed; consequently the nation fell into its usual course of tranquillity and fearlessness. The graver sort of people met with but little to annoy them from the officials and partizans of the government, beyond the occasional infliction of unfathomable and almost interminable Calvinistic sermons, which at length became the objects of their patronage and the style of their adoption. And the gayer portion of the nation learnt at length how to endure life uncheered by the moralizing influence of dramatic entertainments, which, although the most instructive and rational of all amusements ever invented by high talent and masterly genius, and patronized best by the most civilized of communities, were sternly interdicted by the harsh zealots of the day; or as Sir Walter Scott calls them "the bigots of the iron time." The aristocrats, and indeed the wealthy classes generally, quietly watched the turn of Fortune's wheel, and whichever name, Oliver or Charles, appeared to them to promise a permanent ascendancy, to that they tendered "their lives and fortunes" to defend. And when afterwards detected in the committal of political mistakes, usually called high-treason, did their best to explain away facts, and marvelously illustrated the art of blowing hot and cold at the same time; thus furnishing the world with edifying lessons in the school of national duplicity.

As the revolutionary terrors and party-rage died away, the little stranger Love, walked forth from his hiding-place, where he had so long trembled for his future existence, and forgetful of the past, performed his usual gambols with the sons and daughters of men; and among his multitudinous pairings of them for the hymeneal altar, made numerous and

bold attempts on the heart of the lady of our memoir, the sad and world-abjuring Trevor Hanmer. Her Catholic biographer has drawn her picture with his pen, and certainly, in a worldly sense, she was not an unloveable object. "She was above the middle stature of women, excellently well-shaped, her complexion not extraordinarily fair, but comely and lasting (that is, a brunette); her features were charming, and her eyes brown, as well as her hair (probably he means hazel eyes and chesnut hair). Her countenance was fraught with such singular sweetness, as several painters who drew her pictures admired, but owned their skill insufficient to express. This beautiful symmetry of her body was accompanied with no less lovely qualities of her mind. Her humour was grave and serious, yet sweetened by such an affability as rendered her conversation no ways disagreeable or uneasy (meaning, imposed no restraint); but sought after by all.

Recommended by such alluring personal attractions, added to the high respectability of her family, her mother, the first Lady Hanmer having been a maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria, and her father a courtier from his boyhood, it is no matter of surprise that she was much sought by lovers. Several men of rank, and who were of high standing at the court of the late unhappy king made advances for her favour; and not a few matches, very honourable and advantageous in a pecuniary point of view, were decidedly refused by her. As she had resolutely closed her heart against the admission of the tender passion, it naturally followed that her doors should also be shut against its votaries; but as some of the heiress hunters persevered in their troublesome attentions, she found it essential to her peace to think of some plan of removing herself beyond the reach of their importunities. At length, having obtained her father's consent, she quitted Alrhey, and took her cousin Mrs. Catherine Kinnaston with her to Brainford, near London, where they both resided with an elderly gentleman, a friend of her father's, of the name of Hawley. But here she found she had only quitted one scene of annoyance for another, as she was pestered with suitors as much as ever: and an urgent letter from her father to back the pretensions



of Sir John Warner, a young baronet of a fine person and extensive estate, added to her other sources of discomfort. Ultimately, after some wavering between her sense of duty to her father, and her objections to marriage, she appealed to the generosity of this gentleman, urging that if he really loved her, he could not prove his regard more decidedly than by abandoning his present pursuit, and never troubling her more. Whether his pride was wounded by this repulse, or that his good sense suggested the uselessness of seeking the love of a woman who so firmly avoided his attentions, certain it is, that he immediately gave up the pursuit. However, notwithstanding what appeared his inevitable rejection at present, one of those accidents of life that can never be foreseen, brought about events that human probability never could have calculated upon.

While Trevor Hanmer resided at Brainford, the demise of a great political character occurred—the death of the Protector Oliver Cromwell. One of the great events of her life was destined to come to pass on the day of his interment, among the illustrious of England in Westminster Abbey. Although the lady of our memoir would have been among the last in the world that could have been drawn from her retirement to glean satisfaction among the crowds of sight-seekers, who rejoice in the grandeur of the weddings and coronations of the potentates of the earth, the sombre glories of a national funeral of the greatest actor in the political drama of the age, was too congenial to her taste to have absented herself from witnessing it. Her former biographer says, “his splendid and magnificent funeral” invited all people to a sight of it, and her, amongst the rest. And Providence so ordered it that she should be spectatress, with some of her friends, in the same balcony which Sir John Warner and some of his relations had taken, to behold the same solemnity, it being only separated in the middle, to divide the two companies.”

It appears this accidental meeting produced all the effect desired by those friends who were most desirous of promoting a match between this lady and the young Baronet. *It is also evident that she was as much taken with the*



person, manners, and address of Sir John, as he could possibly be with her own winning graces and stately figure. And although she had formerly repulsed his advances and rejected his addresses, she now either saw him in a more favourable light, or abandoned her prejudices against the marriage state. Certain it is, however, that he became her accepted lover; and after a very brief courtship, the long-resisting Trevor Hanmer appeared before the world in the new character of Lady Warner.

Of this passage in her life her Catholic biographer says:—"Providence, that oftentimes makes use of contrary means to bring about its own designs appeared wonderfully in this, and gave her no less inclination to receive, than it had given Sir John to make his addresses. This was extremely wondered at by those who knew her disposition; nay, even by herself when she found such an inclination to what before she had entertained so great an antipathy. In fine, she who had stood out several years courtship from others was gained in three weeks by Sir John. They were married in London by the bridegroom's relative Dr. Warner, Bishop of Rochester, on the 7th of June, 1659."

That she made a most excellent wife and maintained her station in society with due dignity, many evidences in her life are adduced to prove. Her biographer gives a touching instance of her meek spirit of deferential obedience to her husband that may astonish, but cannot prove otherwise than edifying to the wives of our days; as it would suffer in any other, we give it in the quaint language of the narrator. "Not long after her marriage she had a singular trial given her, as well of humility as of patience; which was the more sensible, because given by one she so passionately loved. Having taken a little ramble with his brother-in-law about the country which lasted some days without acquainting his lady whither he went, on his return she expressed her joy at seeing him safe returned home, and made a tender expostulation with him why he would be so unkind as to leave her so long in that solicitude, by going and staying such a while abroad without apprizing her of his intention." He, like other young men, often too jealous of losing their authority

by too kind a condescension to their wives, made an ill interpretation of her kind demand; looking upon it as a sort of controulment. He told her "it belonged not to her to require an account of his actions; that he would have his liberty to go and come when he pleased, without informing any one why or whither he went." This unexpected answer might well have affected a less meek and submissive spirit than her's; but she, good soul, conceiving herself to blame, fell upon her knees, and begging pardon *for so just an offence*, promised never more to offend in the like manner; and this promise she kept all her life after. This was the only misunderstanding that ever happened between them during their lives.

It was about two years after their marriage, when they had become the happy parents of two daughters, and were living at the height of prosperity, encircled with all the felicities of which human life is capable, that Lady Warner's old passion for the nun's veil revived, in all its former intensity and ardour. Instead of considering this wonderful accumulation of comforts in the light of especial blessings of the Creator, that in a pious humble mind would naturally call forth a grateful and adoring spirit of thankfulness and profound gratitude to the source of bliss, the giver of all goodness; by some perversity of reasoning, such as could find place only in the bosom of the monomaniac of fanaticism, she chose to view them with an evil eye, and to deem them curses. It seems a misgiving came over her mind, that all this earthly happiness which surrounded her was a flowery snare, contrived by the enemy of the human race, to decoy her from the paths of eternal salvation. Powerfully impressed with these alarming sentiments, a veil of gloom and despondency overshadowed her daily existence. After numerous consultations with both Protestant and Catholic divines, she came at length to a fixed resolution of changing her religion. To this end she opened her mind to her husband, and *begged his leave to save her soul*; which request she explained by assuring him she was impressed *with strong convictions* that she could never be saved *but by being reconciled to the Church of Rome. To satisfy*

himself of the propriety of the steps which she contemplated, Sir John Warner, we are told, followed the example of his lady (to whom he seems to have played second fiddle, at a remote distance, in all things), and had numerous consultations with the divines of both churches.

We are also informed that although the Protestant clergy who appeared as the champions of their faith, were among the most learned of their times, and held the highest rank in the church of England, they failed to produce on the mind either of Sir John or his lady those convictions which could establish and confirm them in the Protestant faith. Such a result is by no means to be wondered at, when we consider the nature of the reading with which Lady Warner solaced her leisure, or rather to which she devoted her entire time. It formed exactly the sort of food that such a diseased mind would habitually crave for, calculated as it was, to increase the fever of her mental distemper, and become as oil on the lurid fires of monastic fanaticism; with which, more or less, she had been infected from her childhood, till at length it became the master passion of her soul. The unwholesome literature from which she imbibed such mental poison consisted principally of the Traditions of the Fathers and the Lives and Legends of the apocryphal Saints of the Roman Catholic Church. These, it is well-known, abound with such daring violations of truth, such incredible fictions, respecting the monkish miracles attributed to their cowed and veiled heroes and heroines, that it is difficult to conceive a mind, in other respects sane and rational, of sufficient gullibility to give them implicit credence. Thus the Protestant divines, whose faith and ministry were limited to the contents of the Old and New Testaments, and the Apostles' Creed, could win no credit with the fore-biassed votaries of monkish superstition. Armed only in their simple honesty and plain straightforwardness, referring alone to the Scriptures, and the Redeemer's sacrifice, as the source of salvation, they were ill-matched on this occasion against the subtleties of the Jesuits who were *opposed* to them. These crafty worthies possessed in *perfection* the art of making the worse appear the better cause

—of explaining away everything objected to by Protestants, in their doctrines and practices; and of placing the weeded garden of Protestantism in the most odious light and unfavourable position. In the end, Sir John Warner, evidently a weak-minded man, and like his father-in-law, guided in all things by his wife, not only consented that she should abandon the reformed religion and embrace Roman Catholicism, but became himself a convert to that faith.

Lady Warner having gained this important point, which brought her into the immediate vicinity of the grand object of her untiring aspirations, her next move, she resolved should be decisive, and lead direct to her ultimatum—the veil. With all the persuasive eloquence of which she had become the mistress, she represented to her husband, the perillous state in which she conceived they both stood, in respect of their destiny hereafter, powerfully urging the impediments to a life of holiness formed by their affluent position; dwelling strongly on the literal interpretation of the passage, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven.” Finally, she suggested the desperate remedy of making away with their fortune and estate, of abandoning all their early felicities, and retiring from the snares of the world, to practise the austerities of penitents amidst the cloistered seclusions of monastic life.

It appears Sir John coincided with her in all these views; they determined to seize the first opportunity of abandoning the shores of England for ever, to go abroad and respectively take the monastic vows. Previous to putting these designs into execution, and preparatory to their departure, they commenced the practice of sleeping apart from each other, and living like brother and sister; “although,” says Lady Warner’s biographer, “to avoid suspicion they appeared as usual.” They lived thus from the date of their resolution, the sixth of July, till the twenty-seventh of October, the last day of their sojourn at home, when Sir John made over his estate to his brother, after having arranged a limited fortune for each of his two daughters.

*By this time Lady Warner had become absolutely fana-*

tical in her zeal for her new faith. We are told "her fervor had so transported her that she had even worn off the skin of her knees by praying," and might have done herself much bodily harm but for the interference of her husband. A frantic passion for converting to the Roman Catholic faith all her servants and neighbours next seized her, in which undertaking she was so far successful that when on the 27th of October she took her departure from the family mansion, besides her two children, she had the following converts which she personally made, to accompany her:—Her sister-in-law, Lady Elizabeth Warner; her kinswoman, Mrs. Elizabeth Skelton; and several others. Immediately on her arrival at Dover, October 29th, they embarked in the packet-boat, leaving Sir John behind to come after them.

Anticipating the opposition of their friends to such expatriation, it will be observed, Sir John Warner and his lady conducted their arrangements with great precaution and secrecy. However, when their determination became known, it created a considerable sensation among their relations, friends, and the courtly circle of the restored monarch, Charles II. It was at this period that application was made to the king to prevent their departure from the country, when his profligate majesty gave the witty answer referred to in the early part of this memoir.\* But although Charles, at first, declined to interfere, it appears the interest at court, and importunity of the Warner family, at length prevailed, and he gave the order to prevent their embarkation *just one day too late*, when that event had already taken place, and, therefore, obedience to it was out of the question; the interdiction arriving on the 30th of October, while they had sailed from Dover on the 29th.†

Lady Warner, her two daughters, and her party of de-

\* See page 457.

† This order was obtained by Dr. Warner, uncle to Sir John, and physician to Charles II. This modest member of the medical faculty manifested a particular affection for his nephew's estate; and was very urgent with the king to make him a grant of it, and so invalidate Sir John's will in favour of his brother. Unworthy as were generally the dispensations of court favour by this worthless monarch, it seems the atrocious request of the venerable doctor was not complied with.



votes, landed at Dunkirk the very day on which the king's command to suspend their departure arrived at Dover. Immediately on her arrival, she went to the nunnery of the English Poor Clares, and was greatly pleased with their rude fare, rigorous discipline, and hard manner of living. She then commenced a tour, that might well be designated Travels and Tribulations in search of Monastic Misery, in which she visited many different nunneries; meeting and conversing with numerous English Catholic ladies, from whom she derived all the information she required about their respective establishments. Lady Warner ultimately, took the noviciate's habit at Liege, amongst the English nuns called St. Sepulchrine's, of the order of St Austin.

At the ceremony of the "Cloathing," as it is called which signifies the formal adoption of the noviciate's costume, she evinced something of a romantic taste in the choice of an euphonious and pretty name. She desired to be known for the future only as Sister Teresa Clare; in consequence of the high regard in which she held that saint, from having read her life in England. It was after hearing the "cloathing sermon," preached from the text "although I am black I am comely," that she gave such a whimsical and truly ludicrous instance of her *blind obedience* to the lady abbess's intimation "that she should black herself," as quoted from Pennant at the commencement of this memoir.

Austerity and self-infliction now became the rules and habits of her life; as an instance of the spirit in which she conducted herself, we are told that the cordial reception and bland manners of the abbess and the holy sisterhood offended her—"so displeasing was it to her to receive any worldly satisfaction, after she had made a solemn sacrifice of all her earthly felicities."

It appears she made a most exemplary nun, and acquired the highest fame obtainable for cloistered sanctity, for the rest of her life consists of highly coloured records of her superlative piety, her abhorrence of every personal gratification, and her enthusiastic delight in the severest mortifications that human nature could endure. One of her written *resolutions runs thus*—"For the love of God I will ever

deny myself whatever is pleasing to me, though lawful; and endeavour, *as far as holy obedience will permit*, to do all such things for his sake, as shall be most contrary to my nature. Let all creatures love, praise, and honour Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, but let me be confounded."

From the words above, which we have placed in italics, we are led to infer that the monastic authorities occasionally interposed, to prevent or moderate the severities of her self-inflicting penances; and that "holy obedience" alone could operate as a restraint. That these ameliorating influences were displeasing to her would appear from the circumstance recorded, that she meditated leaving this nunnery, *captivated* by the more rigorous discipline of an order of nuns called Carthusianasses. But finding that none but virgins were received there, she at length became a sister of the Poor Clares of Graveling, in Dunkirk.

Among her triumphs over human feelings, it is stated that she cast her picture, said to be a fine painting and an excellent likeness, into the fire, and rejoiced in its destruction. When her two daughters, Catherine and Susan, were admitted to visit their mother, after a long absence, she denied herself the heart-touching gratification of seeing, much less embracing them. These poor girls were educated in the convent of the Ursulines, but ultimately took the veil and became nuns in the Benedictine convent at Dunkirk; and Sir John Warner became a Jesuit, by the name of Brother Clare.

Among the instances of "blind obedience" attributed to Sister Clare, one is mentioned, that with people of the world guided by mere common sense, would be regarded simply as a piece of silliness, equally absurd with the one before stated, of blacking herself with the soot of the chimney. Her eulogistic biographer has evinced some degree of simplicity in recording such absurdities as so many addendas to her imputed virtues, which are more likely to provoke risibility than to excite admiration. One night, when the reverend mother abbess went to tuck in the bedclothes of the *holy sisterhood*, it was found that Sister Clare's bed lacked an additional blanket, as the season of severe weather

had set in. The good lady said she would go down stairs and fetch it, desiring her in the meantime not to lie down till she returned. Some unexpected duty, however, diverted her attention from that purpose, which she entirely forgot; and the obedient Sister Clare was found in the morning in the sitting posture which she had left her in, and probably almost frozen to death. She departed this life on the 26th of January, 1670. After indulging in somewhat extravagant rhapsodies on her superhuman excellencies, and even citing miraculous evidences in favour of her sanctity, her Catholic biographer says "she lived a saint and so she died."

A splendid monument\* was erected to her memory in the burial ground of the convent of the Poor Clares of Graveling, at Dunkirk, where she died. It bears a long Latin inscription, of which the following is a translation:—

STOP, READ, ADMIRE,  
 Stay passenger, and pay a due tribute of tears  
 To this funeral.  
 Here lies buried  
 CLARE OF JESUS.  
 Her name speaks her no ordinary person,  
 The noble and illustrious house of the Hanmers  
 Boasts of her as their progeny.  
 This star lay hid a little while,  
 Clouded with the darkness of errors,  
 That afterwards it might adorn the world  
 With a more resplendent orb.  
 She married the Honourable  
 SIR JOHN WARNER, BARONET,  
 But breathing after nothing but Heaven,  
 She aspired to celestial nuptials;  
 And her desires being approved and consented to  
 By her excellent husband,  
 Forsaking his embraces and those also  
 Of her dearest father and children,  
 She ceased to be of the world to be of Jesus,  
 She chose this monastery  
 For the theatre of her virtue,  
 Where she carried the sweet yoke  
 Of Christ to her very last breath,  
 By the practice of all perfection,  
 Verifying her name GLORIOUS.  
 She lived;  
 And died  
 In the year of our Lord,  
 MDCLXX, the 26th day of January.

\* The reverend mother abbess desired that as long as the monastery should stand, that her monument there might be adduced as a proof that so eminent a character had once been an inmate of its walls.

In conclusion of this memoir we shall here present for the reflection of our fair readers, some of whom, perhaps, may be infected with the romantic absurdity of changing their religion and becoming nuns, the following remarks on the conventual order, by two of the most renowned moralists and advocates of rational piety, that ever enlightened and adorned our literature—Mrs. Hannah More and Doctor Johnson. The former observes, "Women of the higher class were not sent into the world to shun society, but to improve it. They were not designed for the cold and visionary virtues of solitudes and monasteries, but for the amiable and endearing offices of social life: they are of a religion which does not impose idle austerities, but enjoins active duties—a religion of which the most benevolent actions require to be sanctified by the purest motives—a religion which does not condemn its followers to the comparatively easy task of seclusion from the world, but assigns them the more difficult province of living uncorrupted in it; which while it *forbids them to follow a multitude to do evil*, includes in that prohibition the sin of doing nothing; and which, moreover, enjoins them to be followers of Him who went about doing good."

Doctor Johnson, with pithy brevity, remarked to the abbess of a convent which he visited in France, "Madam, you are here, not for the love of virtue, but the fear of vice;" one of the best comments ever passed on monastic institutions.



## THE EMPRESS HELENA,

DAUGHTER OF KING COEL GODEBOG, WIFE OF CONSTANTIUS  
CHLORUS, AND MOTHER OF CONSTANTINE THE GREAT, EM-  
PERORS OF ROME.

Helena, or as she is called in Welsh annals, Elen,\* was the eldest of the three children of Coel, surnamed Godebog, king of that part of Britain called *Caer-collen*, or Hazletown, which in after time became Anglified under the name of *Coelchester*. He was the son of a prince called *Tegvan-glôf*, stands in his pedigree the sixteenth generation in descent from *Beli-mawr*, king of all Britain, and commenced his regal functions A.D. 262. Her mother's name was *Stradwan*, sole daughter and heiress of *Cadwan*, King of North Wales. Helena had a sister named *Gwawl*, or *Julia*, and a brother called *Cenau*.† Her mother is supposed to have died soon after the birth of her brother, who was the youngest of the family; so that in early life Helena became the mistress and manager of her father's domestic establishment.

Britain was at this time a Roman colony, and all its princes tributary to Rome, the mistress of the world, and the entire island under the dominion of a Roman Governor. The reigning Emperors of this period were *Dioclesian* and *Maximinian* awfully memorable as the authors of the most dire persecution of the Christians that ever aided to desolate the world, and impede the progress of civilization, of the effect of which in Britain we have to treat hereafter.

It occasionally happened that the imperial authorities at Rome appointed one of the English kings to hold also the dignity of Roman governor, or lieutenant of the emperors, and not unfrequently some of the turbulent princes of Britain usurped that rank and authority, conquering and killing their foreign master, and assuming his office of col-

\* Elen, pronounced *Ellen*; her surname was *Llwyddawg*, signifying the prosperous.

† Pronounced *Kenay*.



lecting tribute money from other contemporary sovereigns, which it would appear they were not always very scrupulous in transferring to the coffers of the imperial treasury. From the latter imputation, old king Coel, the father of Helena, can be by no means exonerated. The chronicled fate of the different Roman governors and British princes who occasionally filled both offices, previous to the reign of this prince, seems almost like a parody on the first chapter of Matthew—merely by substituting the word *slew* for *begot*. Beginning with the year 208, in the reign of the Emperor Severus, the gory record runs, “Fulgenius slew Severus; Bassanius slew Geta; Carassius slew Bassanius; Alectus slew Carassius; Asclepiodotus slew Alectus, and Livius Gallus; and Coel, the father of Helena, slew Asclepiodotus; and was fortunate enough not to be slain himself: for we are told he reigned over the Britons twenty-seven years after, during a considerable portion of which period he exercised the double functions of a British king and Roman governor. In the latter office however, he failed to fulfil one important point of duty, perhaps the chief, in the estimation of his imperial masters—that of forwarding to Rome the tribute money which he had collected.

The Roman governor Asclepiodotus, slain in battle by king Coel, it seems was a strenuous advocate for the pagan worship of the Roman gods; and as the latter is said to have been a Christian, and to have zealously encouraged the faith, as brought from Rome by Brán ab Llyr\* (and which had long been working its way in Britain) among his household and subjects, it may account for the origin of the hostility between them, which ended, as before observed, in the destruction of Coel's predecessor. This unique and connected chain of regal and vice-regal butcheries in Britain, which seems to have been the most approved model of modern Turkish governors, in their *disposal* of their predecessors in office, appears to have grown out of the Roman neglect of their British colonies; in consequence of their own intestine divisions at home. Those troubles being at length settled the

\* See the memoir in this work of Gwladys Emma.

arrears of tribute, long unpaid by the Britons, became a subject of consideration with the emperors and the senate; for ancient Roman authorities would no more forego their claims of tribute money, than the Roman Popes their Peter's pence in after ages. Consequently, within a month of the death of king Coel, there arrived from Rome, duly accredited by the two reigning emperors, "a noble and prudent prince called Constantius Chlorus<sup>\*</sup> with a puissant army;" whose declared business it was, in the first place to demand the tribute money claimed by Rome, and afterwards to remain stationary, as the governor of the Roman colonies in Britain.

The *prudence* of Constantius must certainly remain unquestionable, from that most persuasive of arguments, the "puissant army," which he brought into the controversy; otherwise instead of gaining either of his two points, it is probable that the fate of the predecessors of king Coel would have awaited him. King Coel, however, seemed by no means flattered in having his stewardship questioned, and to be brought to book so unceremoniously. His temptation to resist the demand of his superior potentate was somewhat weighty;—that is to say the tribute purse—containing the additions of the successive Roman-British governors who had preceded him in that usurped office; and to part with it thus summarily, was not to be thought of without a struggle. We really could wish, agreeable to the sober tone of this work, to treat the father of the renowned Helena, with the decorous gravity of an historical character, as others have done before us; but truly his position and conduct appear so minutely paralleled by the proceedings of a Turkish pasha, suddenly relieved from the toils of governing by an unexpected successor armed with the firman of the Sultan, that it is difficult to recollect the worthy we treat of, is not one of the turbanned votaries of the tomb of Mecca—that he is not aiming at the Oriental wit of bowstringing the new governor instead of obeying him. We are informed by the old Welsh chronicle that "when Constantius, in his character of Roman commandant, landed his 'puissant army,' that king Coel

<sup>\*</sup> Constantius was by birth a Roman; his father was named Eutropius, his mother Claudia, niece to the Emperor Claudius Gothicus.

assembled his Britons to oppose him;—but greatly dreading the powers of this Roman functionary, he sent to him to commune and treat of peace, with the acknowledgement of the tribute due unto the Roman senate; on which assurance being given and taken on both sides, Coel died about a month after, having governed the Britons from A.D. 262 to 289, a period of twenty-seven years."

\* As the Britons had been taught a few stern lessons in the school of Roman severity, when the supremacy of that great people was questioned, it may be conceived, when the object of the new governor is considered, that the presence of Constantius Chlorus was at first dreaded by the Britons; especially as King Coel had slain the last Roman lieutenant, usurped his functions, and seized upon the imperial treasure; but when he presented himself amongst them, the public fears and unfavourable opinion were immediately changed by his gracious demeanour and affability. Manly, frank, and generous, he was formed no less to win the admiration of the gallant Roman legions, than to find favour in a lady's eye. It fortunately happens that the pen of history has recorded a few descriptive traits of his person. It appears, he was tall in stature, and graceful in his movements and address, with a fresh ruddy complexion, the floridity of which was somewhat reduced by his usual costume, consisting of certain fanciful green vestments.\*

With such recommendations, in person, taste, and manners, it was no matter of wonder that when he was first introduced to Helena by her father, that he was well received by her, and that an intimacy grew between them, which soon after produced the most desirable results. The British princess, on her own part, is said to have been very attractive, and accounted "the fairest and most accom-

\* An old author cites the following authorities in contradiction to those who have asserted that Constantius obtained his surname of Chlorus from the paleness of his countenance. "Tristan thinketh that Constantius was not called Chlorus from his paleness, since Eumenius attributeth to him a very sanguine complexion; but from some green garments which he wore when he was young; and he mentioneth others who had the same surname."—*Edward Leigh's Analecta Caesarum Romanorum, or Select Observations of all the Roman Emperors; published in 1664.*



plished beauty in the land," of which the young Roman governor appears to have been very sensible from their earliest interviews. As history informs us that King Coel died about a month after the landing of Constantius in this island, it is probable that he did not live to witness the event most desirable to him for different reasons, the union of his daughter with the Roman governor, in whose power he stood in regard to his offences against the empire, but that the British nobles and chiefs observing the degree of fervour with which Constantius regarded the young princess, and anxious to close every breach and conciliate the good will of the Romans, gave him the good and acceptable counsel to espouse her. To this happy arrangement, we may surmise, Helena made no very cogent objections, as their nuptials took place accordingly.

By this auspicious union, Constantius, as the husband of Helena, became the successor of her father, King Coel, which dignity he held in addition to his supreme governorship of this island, under the emperors Dioclesian and Maximian.

It may be noticed here, that however expedient and fortunate this union may have been deemed at the time, that the order of succession, according to the law of primogeniture, was thereby violated, as Cenau, the son of Coel, possessed the right of succeeding to his father's crown and dominions, instead of his sister Helena. But it does not appear that any evil consequences resulted from this irregularity. It is supposed that when Cenau attained his majority that adequate compensation was made, having dominions assigned him in the north of England, as his descendants appear in history as princes of Cumberland, then called *Gwynlad y Cymru*, or land of the Cambrians, whence the derivation of its modern signification. This, among many other such instances, tends to shew that the ancient British sovereignty was neither strictly hereditary nor elective, but partook of both those elements, and expediency, too frequently, seems to have guided the chieftains of the country in their choice of the sovereign whom they raised to the throne. If a sovereign prince at the time of his de-

cease had a son of mature age, he usually succeeded his father, as a matter of right. If, on the contrary, that son was a minor, the late king's brother, or some other aspiring chieftain, was elected to the sovereignty, either for his superior capacity or the strength of the party which supported him, without any stipulation that he should at a future time lay down the ensigns of authority. When the minor prince arrived at his majority, the reigning sovereign was never known to resign his crown voluntarily, but to uphold it by force of arms, and even to prefer his son to succeed him at his death. Thus the land became a scene of dire contention between the progeny of deprived princes and the descendants of usurpers, if they could be so called, who stood on the right of election, and who claimed an equal title to the sovereignty with those of legitimate descent. From this vicious and uncertain mode of succession, in addition to the evils arising from the custom of gavel-kind, resulted those calamities which ultimately annihilated the sovereignty of the ancient Britons.

Constantius and Helena soon after their union quitted Coel-chester, and established themselves in the city of York, as the metropolitan seat of their sovereignty. "It was in this fine northern city that the Emperor Severus\*

\* As there were several Roman emperors who assumed the surname of Severus, it is necessary to state that this sovereign was Septimus Severus, who caused the fifth persecution of the Christians. In his first British war, according to Dio, he lost 50,000 men. Upon a second defection in Britain he commanded a universal slaughter of the natives, in a Greek verse, thus translated, in the true Sternhold and Hopkins style, and our own version:—

Let none escape your bloody rage,  
With terror let all die,  
Spare not the mother, nor the babe  
Which in her womb doth lie.

That none escape your bloody wrath,  
Let death and horror mark your path,  
To sure extermination doom'd  
Both dame and child within her womb.

Septimus Severus gained his surname Britannicus by partially building, and wholly repairing, the British wall, as it was called, between England and Scotland, 132 miles in length, which served both as a boundary line and rampart of defence against the northern barbarians. This great Roman



had previously taken up his residence, during his long sojourn in our island, and there his empress, Julia Domna, and her sister, Julia Mesa, joined him." A well written article in a periodical of the day, by a distinguished authoress lately deceased, tempts us to transcribe into our pages the following notice of the times under present consideration. "These princesses (the two Julias), were curious to cultivate the acquaintance of the native ladies in a familiar way; and drawing around them a large circle from the highest rank, whom their graces attracted and their amiable manners charmed, they saw with gratified pleasure that such daily intercourse added a new polish to the already shining qualities of the *fair barbarians*. Taste brought its elegancies, also, to adorn their persons, by promoting a feminine industry even amongst themselves, to produce the beautiful materials. Splendid dresses were wrought, of finer loom than what the fleece of the flock could present, or the yarn from the spindle provide. Silks were imported from Italy, gold embroidery engaged the new-turned ambition of these young Boadiceas of the second century."\*

If Britain could boast such improvements among the higher classes of our native ladies in the time of the Emperor Severus, we may calculate on considerable advancements

wall in our country merits notice. "At the end of each mile in the wall was a tower, and pipes of brass (in the wall betwixt every tower), conveyed the least noise from garrison to garrison, without interruption, so that news of an approaching enemy was quickly spread over the borders and occasional provision made for resistance. There were also resting places for the *Arceans*, who were appointed by the ancients (saith Amon. Marcellinus), to serve for footposts, to run as occurrences fall, between the officers, and carry them word of the least stirring. Since the wall is ruined, and that way of dispatch taken away many inhabitants thereabout hold land by a tenure in *cornage* (as lawyers speak), being bound by blowing a horn to discover the irruption of the enemy." —*Camden's Britannica*.

\* The Roman Ladies in Britain; an article in the *Boudoir*, a ladies' periodical, edited by the late Mrs. Barrow Wilson. This authoress has not been fortunate in attributing to "Julia Domna" qualities capable of improving our ancient British females. The Emperor Severus first espoused Martina, a lady of exemplary qualities. Soon after her death he married Julia Domna, "because he found by her nativity she should be matched with a king; though he foresaw not by his art, saith Salmassius, that he was destined to wed a woman who was notoriously no Lucretia."

still in the days of Helena; when the fair relatives and followers of Constantius, doubtless brought their share of elegancies and industry to add to the former stock. But before we proceed in the regular course of this memoir, we are tempted to transplant into our pages the elegant episode on the ladies' worktable, attached to the same article from which we have quoted the above.

"It is with fond and venerating recollections that the writer stops here to pay her heartfelt tribute to the worktable of her sex; to that modest shrine of all the domestic virtues! There, unpretending industry and diligent benevolence, without ostentation, provide for family comfort at home, and dispense the same to them whose lot would be shelterless, but for the care of Him 'who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.' Such mothers and such daughters, I have seen seated round their happy work-table; and when those sacred duties of the needle were over, then the graces of the art embellished the board; the smile and blissful talk went round, and every gentle spirit mingled into blessed enjoyment. Books, indeed, add their varying charms to the social circle of our privileged days; the discovery of printing having rendered those sources of improvement and innocent pleasure, common to both sexes, and for all classes too; which, in even the most accomplished periods of the Roman empire, and for ages after, were only to be found in the abodes of the statesman and the sage, locked up in costly volumes of a difficult and laborious penmanship. The ladies of the era of Rome's first influence in this island, were therefore generally confined to learn in conversation, from their fathers or husbands, something of the subjects of interest which men only knew how to read in those rare books: and in this way many of the secrets of nature in 'flood and field,' as well as of the heart-inspiring annals of their country, were passed from these fair foreigners lips, to the not less intelligent, though less cultivated minds of their British female auditors."

About this time the culture of the vine was introduced into Britain; and though it might not produce wine, it afforded a delicious addition to the delicacies of the table—

a very different dessert to that which must have been presented to the grandsires of the now gentle race; when their mothers stood in arms, around a board heaped with acorns and crab-apples—the best fruit then indigenous to the country.

After the death of Severus, whose ashes were buried at York, other successive emperors, with their families, followed his example in visiting this extremity of their empire, and making their residence sometimes at York, and sometimes in London; for both cities were embellished with every architectural order of building, which could administer to its convenience, or increase its splendour. The island was then regarded as a favourite province, an integral part of the empire; and in all respects it seemed to share the advantages peculiar to its august head—of Rome itself.

Notwithstanding the distracted state of Britain under former governors, Constantius soon succeeded in bringing it once more under Roman subjection. By his mild and excellent regulations he soon gained the esteem of the inhabitants, and became so attached as to make it his residence. Attaching him still more ardently to his island home and British bride, Helena gave birth to the wonderful boy, who in aftertime was to change the aspect of the world from the hideousness of a ferocious blood-shedding community, to that of gentleness and peace—the future emperor Constantine the Great.

But a terrible era had now commenced; no less destructive to their most blessed days of conjugal felicity, than the advent of the general misery of mankind—the persecution of the christian churches throughout the world. Constantius was called away for awhile, to command the legions of Rome, on the continent and peninsula of Europe. Although in compliance with the injunctions of the two emperors, he persecuted the christians of Spain and Gaul, his forbearance towards those of Britain was remarkable; and only to be accounted for, from the natural influence over him of his royal consort Helena. Doubtless her power over the heart of Constantius preserved the British christians from the destruction which attended the professors of the faith in



less favoured countries. To estimate the extent of her providential interposition, be it remembered this was the fearful epoch of the tenth general persecution of the christians, which in violence and duration exceeded any former explosion of pagan rage and atrocity. The most severe edicts had been issued by Dioclesian and his associate in the empire for the entire extirpation of the christian religion, by destroying their places of worship, burning the sacred scriptures, and putting its professors to death. The tragical description of this persecution, as given by our countryman Gildas is astounding indeed! He states, "the christian churches throughout the world were overthrown; all the copies of the Holy Scriptures that could be laid hold of, were burnt in the streets; and the Pastors, along with their flocks were put to death. In some places it would appear that every vestige of christianity was about to be abolished; for it seemed, to use his language, as if the whole church was hastening at once to leave the world, and seek repose in the celestial regions, the proper habitation of the just." Unsaundered and even unknown to Helena and Constantine, many of the worthiest christians of Britain also suffered, even to the death, from the savage zeal of some of the subordinate agents of paganism. Of the British christians Gildas says, "Many suffered death; others betook themselves into woods and desert places, to remain secure there until the storm abated; but only the names of three martyrs are recorded, and these were Roman citizens, and who appear to have been persons of note on account of their situation and rank as well as their zeal for christianity. The one was Alban, a citizen of Verulam, which town in after ages had its name changed to St. Albans, in honor of the martyr. The other two were Julius and Aaron of Isca Silurium, or Caerleon, where we learn from Geraldus Cambrensis, there was a church dedicated to each of them. The village of St. Julian, Monmouthshire, owes its name to the former of these martyrs.

This awful persecution lasted ten years; and it has been recorded that in a single month no less than 17,000 christians of both sexes were destroyed.

Although the "tenth persecution" did not entirely cease till the resignation of Dioclesian and Maximinian, yet in all places under the influence of Constantius, its fury had so far abated as to promise a speedy extinction. He then returned to Britain, and Helena had the satisfaction of once more embracing her long absent husband; a happiness, however, somewhat tinged with regret, for her son Constantine came not home with his father. The reigning emperors, ever jealous of their generals, especially those who were popular with the army, at this time under the presumed patronage of young Constantine, while his education was forwarding, stipulated that Constantius should leave him behind at Rome. It was however well understood by both parties, that the view of the Imperial Sovereigns was to keep the youth under their eyes as a kind of honourable pledge, or hostage for his father's fidelity. The readers of Roman History will be aware, that this sort of precaution on the part of the emperors was by no means unnecessary; as the records of the past too frequently proved that the leaders of their armies in distant colonies were too apt to play the parts of demagogues, and under pretence of misgovernment at home, incited their legions to become rebellious towards the reigning powers; to proclaim their general emperor, and to march upon "the capital of the world," to receive from the intimidated and often venal senate, a confirmation of the honors bestowed by the licentious soldiery: the deprived sovereigns being in the meantime doomed to destruction.\*

Thus, with Constantius, her sister Gwawl or Julia, with her chosen friends for courtiers or associates, Helena passed her days for a time, in such a deep and pious sense of happiness as usually succeeds the transition from outrageous

\* Besides this sort of precaution on the part of Dioclesian, we are told that "by the profound wisdom with which he was endued, he found out a more assured way to secure himself against rebellions than others had discovered; for having taken Maximinian for his companion and ally, and afterwards created Galerius and Constantius Cæsars, he rendered himself formidable to those who desired to make themselves Emperors. For in what part ~~never~~ the rebels rose, one of these four was upon their backs, and stifled them in their birth."—*Leigh's Analecra Cæsarium Romanorum*.



grief and daily terror to restored tranquility;—healing the sorrows of the land, to the utmost of her power, by consoling those who were sufferers by the persecution, either from imprisonment or the violent deaths of their friends; and by her counsel, strengthening their minds in the firm faith of the Redeemer's mission. The absence of her son Constantine was doubtless a deep source of regret and disquietude; and although assured that his martial education was better forwarded at Rome than it could be in Britain, with the anxious feelings of a fond mother, she naturally endured misgivings, that the principles of christianity with which she had imbued his youthful mind might be subverted by his association with the gay and profligate heathens of pagan Rome. We are told that during the government of this island by Constantius, "he ruled it with wisdom and prudence, for we find the Britons great and prosperous." Prudence, in fact, appears to have been the peculiar characteristic of this worthy Roman; and agreeably to its dictates, he avoided an ostentatious display of lenity or favour towards the christians, who were at this time the grand objects of imperial vengeance, but he protected them in secret. We have the authority of ancient authors for stating, that in consequence of the moderation of Constantius, the persecution did not last above a year in Britain, and but little more in Gaul.

But this comparatively serene season in the existence of Helena too soon passed away, and was succeeded by a period of gloom, and the most intense infelicity. While Constantius, happily married, and the father of a fine youth, young Constantine, now at Rome, continued in his government of Britain, the demon of ambition instilled his peculiar poison into his breast, and peace of mind vanished. Considering that the two emperors Dioclesian and Maximinian were far advanced in years, and apparently tired of the cares of governing the empire, were contemplating a resignation of their dignities and retirement into the peaceful shades of private life. He therefore set his friends at Rome to intrigue for being nominated Cæsar, or one of the two heirs apparent to the future succession. His feats in war, his excellent

government of Britain, in Dalmatia, and in Gaul, were urged as the most powerful points in his favour, and the fairness of his claims was fully admitted by both the emperors. But Dioclesian objected to his nomination on the score that he was poor; on which his friends sent to exhort him to heap up treasures. This, of course, could only be done from the spoil taken at the sack of cities in the time of war; and in peace, by a rigorous taxation of the people under his government. The generous mind of Constantius was adverse to both these modes of enriching himself; so that his poverty became proverbial, from his liberal habits of rewarding his soldiers, whence he became the idol of the army; and to grind the people with rigorous imposts was his abhorrence. But the pleadings of ambition, however, were too powerful to be resisted; he therefore formed the resolution of addressing the people, to inform them that the impediment to his promotion was his lack of riches; and that to succeed in being appointed Cæsar, it was necessary for him in the first place, to become wealthy.

The soldiers of Constantius, and the citizens who were enriched by his benevolent system of government, could not but remember his generous maxim "that the love of the people is the richest and safest treasury of the Prince;" and that he had been often heard to declare, "that it was fitter that the wealth of the land should be dispersed into the hands of the Commons, than locked up in the coffers of Princes." Therefore, when they heard of his necessities, they are said to have vehemently contended among themselves who should contribute most effectually towards the filling of his exchequer; rejoicing greatly that the opportunity had now occurred of testifying their love to him, by verifying the correctness of his favourite maxims. So great was the success of this appeal to the soldiers and citizens, that he was enabled to produce before Dioclesian's ambassadors the great sums which he had received in a few hours; and they were no less amazed at the immensity of the amount than the liberality of the system by which he so miraculously replenished an exhausted treasury. To prove *how sincere was his confidence in such a source of wealth,*

and that his appeal to public liberality was no charlatan trick to work on their minds for the attainment of ungenerous and illiberal ends, no sooner had the imperial functionaries departed, than he returned the subsidy which had been so handsomely presented to him. An author whom we have frequently quoted remarks, "by such customs as these it was, that he obtained the epithet of 'poor,' rather than that he was so in reality; being by his voluntary poverty richer than Dioclesian himself; yea, than all the other princes together, who were partners with him."

The objection of one of the Emperors being thus removed, and the suffrage of Dioclesian fully obtained, a more serious impediment was raised by the other Emperor. The author last quoted remarks, "Maximinian, tyrannizing over the affections as well as the freedom of mankind, protested that Constantius Chlorus should be declared Cæsar only on the stipulation that he would divorce his wife Helena, and marry his own daughter-in-law Theodora."

These were doubtless, hard terms, and very difficult to be complied with by Constantius, who had lived so long and happily with his British Princess. Such a union, it is true, contracted with the fair native of a demi-savage country, would be regarded by the haughty Romans of that period with about as much respect as our present English aristocrats would deign to accord an enthusiastic Inkle, who had espoused a Yarico, when a more eligible match was attainable, by nullifying his previous union with the bright and beautiful Barbarian bride. But Constantius was no Inkle in principle, for he dearly loved the gentle mother of his boy, and the wife of his early days; and would gladly have spent his entire life with her. But alas, it is added, "he was won by ambition, and the easiness of his nature, which bowed to those who seemed to wish him well, and by the lustre of the purple presented to him."

In an old work, Dr. Crakanthrop's Defence of Constantine, we find the subject of Constantius's marriage with Helena, thus discussed. "Eutropius calleth the marriage of Constantius with Helena *obscurius matrimonium*, a mere obscure marriage; his meaning is plain. For he neither



meant nor said that it was simply ignoble, but speaking comparatively, and comparing it to his second marriage with Theodora, the daughter-in-law of the Emperor; by which he obtained first to be Cæsar, and then Emperor. In respect of the splendour of this second marriage, and the imperial dignity obtained thereby, he did, and might well say, that the former was more obscure, or not so illustrious, though in itself it was both very honourable, and in no sort a disparagement to Constantius."

It appears there was no formal ceremony used in the divorce which took place between Constantius and Helena; he merely left the island, and forsook his first betrothed and best beloved, for a season, and married Theodora.

However humiliating and sad the implied disgrace of repudiation, Helena bore the melancholy and undeserved infliction of fortune with a constancy of fortitude that ennobled her christian profession. She declared that she accounted it a great honour that no other cause was found for her divorce than the good fortune of her lord and husband. It is worthy of observation, as forming a noble contrast to the conduct of many modern princes under similar circumstances, that the good heart of Constantius would not allow him to excuse this iniquitous proceeding, by pretended crimes or faults attributed to the faithful wife whom he had so unjustifiably forsaken. Accordant with the generosity of his character, however otherwise blameable on this point, he bore all the odium of public opinion on his own head. But such an affair in haughty imperial Rome perhaps, was considered as an affair of light regard, that a Roman patrician advanced to the Cæsarship, should forsake his island bride, the young barbarian wife of his first romantic attachment, to unite himself more fitly, according to his bettered fortunes, to the highly-connected patrician, Theodora. Be that as it may, the latter marriage, like many such magnificent delusions, brought Constantius no happiness, although thereby he had two sons, Constantius and Annibalinus. It was well said, "he lived in body with Theodora and in heart with Helena;" the latter, well aware of the constraint which fettered his inclinations



in this forced political marriage, entertained the tenderest regard for her some time husband, the father of her boy, whom she pined to embrace once more, but feared she was never to behold again. The torrent of ambition and the distracting affairs of the world, which had so unhappily parted them, had no power over their affections which ever yearned towards each other during the dreary years of their separation.

Constantius remained Cæsar sixteen years; when Dioclesian and Maximinian laying down the purple and all ensigns of authority, retired into the shades of private life; and he, conjointly with Galerius Armentarius became Emperor. His portion of the Roman Empire was the western provinces of France, Spain, and Britain; while Galerius had Egypt and the provinces in Asia. Some time after, Constantius, who we are told, preferred governing well to monopolizing to himself a great extent of country, gave up both Africa and Italy to Galerius, as too remote from his residence and "the eye of his direction;" as, true to his earliest affection and predilections, now that he was truly his own master, he resolved on making his favourite island of Britain the seat of his sovereignty and his future home.

It was in the evening of his days, about the fifty-fifth year of his life, and one year after his accession to the imperial rank, he returned to Britain, and re-united himself to the long-forsaken Helena, with whom he determined to spend the residue of his life. This intensely happy meeting, however, was incomplete in its superlative degree, from the absence of Constantine, who was employed in business of state by his father; but who immediately sent for him, to meet his mother and himself at York. His return, it is supposed, was delayed by the occurrence of unexpected events; and when he came at last, it was to receive the embraces of his mother, and to obtain the last sight in life, of his imperial father.

Worn with his exertions in the wars, and the cares inseparable from the station he had so long sustained as Cæsar and general of the empire, scarcely a year had elapsed since Constantius's return to Britain, when he was overtaken

by the fatal illness that was so soon to close his career on earth. While his sick bed was surrounded by his wife and friends, with the Roman officials of his court, the latter appear to have formed a party in favour of his son Constantius, by the empress Theodora, and importuned him to name his successor in the imperial dignity. We are told "the dying monarch forgetting his second wife and her offspring, exclaimed aloud *Constantinum pium*; he would have no other successor than the pious Constantine. It appears Constantine arrived in Britain barely in time to receive his father's dying blessing. Raising himself up in his bed, in the presence of his family, his counsellors, and the chiefs of the army, Constantius set the imperial diadem on his head, saw him invested with the purple robes, and declared him Emperor. "Now," exclaimed the dying monarch, "is my death more welcome, and my departure hence more pleasant. I have here a noble monument in my son; one who will, by the blessing of God, dry up the tears of the christians, who have been so cruelly persecuted, and revenge the cruelties exercised by their tyrants." He then turned to his courtiers, officers, and bystanders, and exhorted them to continue faithful to their religion and their prince. In order however, the better to secure the peaceable accession of his son to the throne, after dismissing those who had been present at this scene, he summoned all his principal officers and counsellors who had hitherto been absent around him, and having been himself, in early life, a persecutor of the christians, under the authority of Dioclesian and Maximinian, he executed with greater facility a stratagem which he had invented, to ascertain the stability of their affection and religious faith. He pretended that he had repented his conversion to christianity, and requested them to concur with him again, in sacrificing to the ancient pagan deities. By this device he acquired a perfect knowledge of their genuine sentiments; for some readily acquiesced in the proposal, while others stood firm in their faith. He then immediately dismissed the apostates from their posts, so that when he expired, as he did soon after, to the inexpressible grief of his family and friends, he left Constantine in the hands

of honest counsellors; by whom his succession to the empire was wisely and judiciously secured. This event gave great satisfaction to the Britons, who rejoiced to see one born among them, and descended in the maternal line from their native princes, elevated to the imperial dignity.\*

Soon after the magnificent funeral of the Emperor Constantius Chlorus, who was buried with great pomp at York, Constantine and his mother Helena, prepared for quitting our island, and commencing their journey towards Rome. The empress-mother, it seems, had formed a resolution of accompanying her imperial son to the continent, and of making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as soon as circumstances could be brought about to favour that long-desired object. Helena had an additional motive for being as much as possible in company with her son, and notwithstanding the perils attending a marching legion, continually liable to be opposed and brought to battle by other powers, she would not be dissuaded from a purpose which she held so deeply at heart, by any consideration for her personal safety, but resolved to accompany them at all hazards. By his long absence from Britain, and from that parent who had instructed his childhood in the piety of the Nazarite, and by his prolonged association with the gay youths of Rome, as might have been expected, and as his mother feared and found, Constantine had relaxed much from his early fervour for christianity, although by no means tainted with the splendid paganism of the imperial heathen city. To restore and invigorate his faith, by her presence and conversation, was the great end she promised herself. She was also intensely anxious to be further instructed herself, in the purest principles and practice of the church, which she feared she had so imperfectly acquired in Britain, by an intercourse with the descendants of the earliest christians,

\* According to Eusebius, Constantius lived fifty-six years; was Caesar sixteen years, and Emperor two. Camden states that at the demolition of the monasteries, there was found in the supposed monument of Constantius in Yorkshire, a lighted lamp, said to have been burning there ever since his burial a period of three hundred years!—adding out of Lazinius, that the ancient Romans used in that manner to preserve lights in sepulchres an immense length of time, “by the oiliness of gold, resolved into liquid substance.”

the disciples of the apostles themselves, then residents in the East.

Previous to his embarkation, Constantine appointed Octavius, a British prince of great capacity, as his deputy and Roman governor of the island;\* and then with his mother, his friends, counsellors, and a considerable army, bade farewell to Britain. On the continent he soon commenced the arduous task common to all Roman Emperors, of fighting his way for the sovereignty of that city and nation universally acknowledged the mistress of the world. We transcribe from Roman History the following account of the after proceedings of Constantine.

"He had some competitors at first for the throne. Among the rest was Maxentius, who was at that time (A.D. 311) in possession of Rome, and a steadfast asserter of paganism. It was in Constantine's march against the usurper, we are told, that he was converted to christianity, by a very extraordinary appearance. One evening, the army being upon its march towards Rome, Constantine was intent on various considerations upon the fate of sublunary things, and the dangers of his approaching expedition. Sensible of his own incapacity to succeed without Divine assistance, he employed his meditations upon the opinions that were then agitated among mankind, sent up his ejaculations to Heaven, to inspire him with wisdom to choose the path he should pursue. As the sun was declining there suddenly appeared a pillar of light in the heavens, in the fashion of a cross, with this inscription "IN THIS OVERCOME."† So extraordinary an appearance did not fail to create astonishment both in the emperor and the whole army, who reflected on it as their various dispositions led them to believe. Those who were attached to paganism pronounced it to be a most inauspicious omen, portending the most unfortunate events, but it made a different impression on the emperor's mind, who, as the account goes, was farther encouraged by visions

\* For the after transactions in Britain under Octavius, see the Memoir of "Ellen of the Mighty Host" in this Work.

† The original in Latin runs "Constantine in hoc signo vinces;" *Constantine, under this sign thou shalt have victory.*



the same night. He, therefore, the day following, caused a royal standard to be made, like that he had seen in the heavens, and commanded it to be carried before him in the wars, as an ensign of victory and celestial protection.\* After this he consulted with the principal teachers of christianity, and made a public avowal of that sacred persuasion." He even caused the cross which he was said to have seen in the heavens, to be placed on the right of all his statues, with this inscription, "Under the influence of that victorious cross, Constantine had delivered the city from the yoke of tyrannical power, and restored the senate and people of Rome to their ancient authority." Constantine caused himself to be baptized by Sylvester, the first of that name, Bishop of Rome, a modest and pious ecclesiastic, who little thought of adopting the title of Pope, or king of kings and lord of lords, or any such blasphemous assumptions, like his successors. He was the thirty-first Bishop of the See from the commencement of Christianity, and the first after the tenth or last persecution. This holy man is said to have put the finishing hand to the conversion of the Emperor, and to have persuaded him to make christianity the religion of the Empire. Among the recorded achievements of Constantine, much has been stated of his liberation of incarcerated and condemned christians, his opening of their closed and forbidden places of worship; his destruction of idols and the temples of false gods; and ultimately, his universal establishment of christianity, as the religion of the Roman empire. To relate these things at large is the province of Church History; our immediate business is with Helena, the empress mother, and the subject of this memoir.

When Constantine resolved on building a new city, to be called after his own name, Constantinople, and of removing the seat of empire to the east, it is said he left the government of Rome, so long the emporium of the world, in the hands of Sylvester the Bishop, and then with his mother and

\* In subsequent times Constantine the Great, on his conversion to christianity, placed a cross upon the ball; thus, as it were, laying the world he governed at the feet of Him who redeemed it; and ever since that "consecrated globe" has been retained as the most expressive symbol of the royal character.

followers, sailed for the Bosphorus and commenced the erection of his new metropolis.

It would seem that the emperor left ample funds, and attendants for state and protection, at the disposal of his mother; and while he superintended the building of the new city, Helena and her train went to the Holy Land, and recorded her piety in the manner hereinafter to be stated.

In some accounts of Helena it has been most strangely and ignorantly asserted that among her pious achievements in the Holy Land, she rebuilt *the* Temple of Jerusalem. The astounding error of such a statement will become strikingly manifest when the reader takes into consideration the peculiar nature of each of the three successive temples which were erected on the same site, previous to the time of this British Princess and Roman Empress.

The first temple of Jerusalem was the ancient and glorious fabric built by Solomon, no less stupendous than magnificent, the wonder and admiration of the world; a description of which may be seen in the First Book of Kings, chapters vi. and vii. It was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, at the taking of Jerusalem, A.M. 1350.\* The second temple was commenced after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, and the work carried on under the most unfavourable auspices, from the opposition of the Samaritans, so that the workmen were obliged to wield a sword in one hand and their tools in the other, to repulse the violence of the enemy. When finished it proved far inferior both in its magnificence and appointments, to the first temple; and well might the prophet Haggai remark, "Who is there left among you that saw this house in her first glory? *Is not this in your eyes as nothing?*"† This temple, when it became ruinous, was

\* Some idea of the stupendousness and grandeur of the first temple may be formed by the following statement. In providing the materials for the building there were 30,000 workmen, who wrought by 10,000 a month in Lebanon. 70,000 labourers that bare burthens; 80,000 quarrymen that hewed in the mountains; and officers and overseers of the work no less than 3300 men.

† In the appointments of the second temple, it was deficient of the following five articles which belonged to the first. First, the pot of manna, which the Lord commanded Moses to lay up before the testimony, for a memorial, Exod. vi. 32. Second, the rod of Aaron, which only, among all the rods of the princes of

pulled down by Herod the Ascalonite, partly on account of the mean consideration in which it was held, in comparison with the first edifice. On the removal of the second temple, in order to obtain popularity with the Jews, Herod built the third temple. This structure, although far inferior to the first temple, was considerably superior to the second. This third temple became ever memorable for the earliest ministry of the Saviour of the world, and the scene where he preached salvation to the Jew and Gentile. It was finally destroyed by Titus, son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, surnamed "the delight and solace of mankind," an appellation singularly in contrast with his destructive doings at Jerusalem. After this overthrow, the temple lay unbuild and in rubbish till the reign of Julian the Apostate, who to diminish the number of christians by the increase of the Jews, began to build a fourth temple. But, we are told, no sooner were the foundations laid, than an earthquake cast them up again, and fire from heaven consumed the stones, timber, and the rest of the materials. As for the city of Jerusalem itself, it was re-edified by Ælius Adrianus, who named it Ælia; drove from thence the Jews and gave it to the christians.

Having now shewn what Helena did *not* perform, in regard to rebuilding the Temple of Solomon, an achievement absurdly ascribed to her by some writers, but by none of any credit; it remains to be stated what in reality was the nature of her doings, while on this long-desired visit to the scanty remains of time-honoured ancient Jerusalem.

After having intently paused over every memorable spot, and devoutly meditated over every sacred vestige which reminded her of the presence, death, and passion of the divine founder of our faith, Helena resolved to evince her piety by leaving here a memorial of her pilgrimage to the Holy City. Accordingly, having fixed upon a spot on the Mount of

Israel budded. Third, the ark of the covenant; the making of which is described in Exod. xxv. 10; and the placing of it in the oracle, or sanctum sanctorum, is mentioned in 1 Kings vi. 19. Fourth, the two tables of the law, written by God's own finger, and placed by Moses in the ark of the covenant. Fifth, the fire of sacrifice, which came down from heaven; which fire was by the priests kept continually burning.

Olives where the Temple formerly stood, she there caused a christian edifice to be erected, which she called the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Around this church she also built many houses, which became inhabited by the christians who congregated there. These buildings perpetually increasing till the place became a fair town, when it received the name, from the temple or church which crowned its summit, of the City of the Holy Sepulchre.

Having been informed by Curiacus, then Bishop of Jerusalem, where was hidden the cross on which the Saviour suffered, Helena with passionate eagerness went to work in search of it. An old author states, "much ado had the good lady to find the place where our Lord's bodie had been laid: for the Jews and heathens had raised great hillocks on the place, and built there a temple of Venus. This temple being plucked down, and the earth digged away, she found the three crosses whereon our blessed Saviour and the two thieves had suffered. Helena being perplexed to know which of these was the right crosse, they were all carried to a woman who had been long visited with sicknesse, and now lay at the point of death. The crosses of the two thieves did the weak woman no good; but as soon as they laid on her the crosse on which the Lord died, she leapt up and was restored to her former health."

The same author remarks on the church built by Helena, "this Temple of the Sepulchre, even at the first building was highly revered and esteemed by the christians of these parts; and even untill our dayes, it is much resorted to, both by pilgrims from all parts of the Romish church, who fondly and superstitiously hope to merit by their journey; and also by divers gentlemen of the Reformed churches, who travel hitherward partly for curiosity, and partly because their generous spirits imitate the heavens and delight in motion."\*

Further to celebrate the temple which she had erected, Helena caused an order of knighthood to be instituted, the

\* This author adds "whosoever is admitted to the sight of this sepulchre payeth nine crowns to the Turkish officers; so that this tribute only, is worth to the Grande Seigneur eighty thousand ducats yearly."



members of which were called "Knights of the Sepulchre." They were bound to defend the "Blessed Sepulchre," to war against infidels, and to defend pilgrims. This was the first of the three knighthoods which were originated to celebrate the winning of the Holy Land, and the expulsion of the Mahometans, by the princes of Christendom. The second order was the "Knights of St. John of Jerusalem," instituted in 1124, by Pope Gelasius II.; and the third were the "Knights Templars," instituted in 1113, by Hugh Payennes, and confirmed by Pope Eugenius.\*

The historians of this period truly remark, this was an age in which false opinions and false miracles made up the bulk of an instructive history; and many things are related in early Roman church history, and as fully believed by the credulous votaries of that faith as any statement in holy writ, which among the more enlightened portion of mankind not merely excites the smile of risibility, but provokes indignation, to see matters of profound or sacred interest vulgarized by superstitious and false statements. Among the adherents of reformed christianity but little credibility has been accorded to the account of Helena's discovery of the real cross; and even less to the following *morceau*, so devoutly valued by the believers in monkish miracles, and that mass of trumpery called holy relics. We are told that when Helena discovered the cross on which the Saviour died, that she also found the three nails, by which his body was pierced and attached to it; and that she disposed of them in the following manner. Of one she made a bit for the bridle of the horse of her son Constantine, which endowed the animal with miraculous powers of docility, speed, and sagacity; of another she made a crest for his helmet, which rendered his head-piece invulnerable to the edge of any assailing weapon; and the third nail she used as a *charm*, to calm the turbulence of the Adriatic Sea. Well may such spurious miracles be likened to necromancy, or the pretended mysteries of the

\* The above quoted remarks, "These three orders M. Seldon putteth not in his 'Titles of Honour,' but deservedly excludeth them therefrom, *inasmuch* *they* *were prohibited to kisse a woman: honourary knighthood, and the love of ladies, going together like vertue and reward.*"

black art. These records state that while Helena and her train of devotees from the Holy Land were returning to Britain, when approaching the city of Venice, the severe tempestuous weather which always made the gulf of Venice so dangerous till that period, was unusually stormy; on which Helena cast the last remaining nail of the cross into the perilous vortex of the heaving ocean; we are told that it acted like oil in calming the turbulence of the raging billows; and ever since that time the lagoons of Venice have been proverbially mild and free from tempestuous visitations."

It is said in the "Genealogy of the Saints" and other ancient records, that Helena not only discovered "the real cross," but brought it with her to Britain. Ross, in his "Antiquities of Warwickshire," states that it was brought to Britain by St. Neot; but among other authorities an ancient Welsh bard says—

"Dioben Elen Godebog  
I gred a gavas y grog."

Implying that without difficulty Elen Godebog found the cross for Christendom. In the times of our Roman Catholic ancestors, when relics and effigies of saints were held in pious esteem and sacred veneration, this *Croes Naid* (Cross of Refuge), as it came to be called in Welsh, was set in and ornamented with gold and silver, and adorned with precious stones, so that on pompous state occasions it formed one of the principal features in a procession.\*

Although a zealous votary of christianity from her childhood, and habitually practising its merciful dictates, it seems that neither Helena nor her celebrated son were thoroughly imbued with its doctrines till the miraculous conversion of Constantine, and her travels to the Holy Land. But when at length she returned to her native country, she came in a state of enlightenment never previously enjoyed by any native of our island; and was therefore looked up to by the christians of Britain with great veneration and affection.

\* For further information respecting the *Croes Naid*, we refer the reader to an interesting article in the first volume of the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, a new quarterly Welsh periodical of great merit, under the head of *Regalla of Wales*, to which we have been partly under obligation for this information.

At this period Octavius still reigned as king of Britain and Roman governor. Although he held both those great offices at first in defiance of Constantine, yet as he discharged the royal functions so ably, and performed his duties as the lieutenant of the empire with unquestioned faithfulness, he was not molested by the imperial authorities. Helena was doubtless received by him with all the honours due to her exalted rank and advanced age. But she had other views than concerning herself with the affairs of politics and government. Admiring as we do, the views of the authoress of the "Roman Ladies in Britain," on the close of Helena's career, we shall conclude our notice of this celebrated woman by one more quotation from that article to which we have been under so much obligation in another part of this memoir.

"While this monarch (Constantine the Great) reigned, Britain enjoyed perfect peace. To partake so blessed a dispensation, his mother now returned to her native land: herself full of the mild lessons of the Gospel. For in those early times, the principles of worship learnt in the east from the primitive disciples of the Apostles themselves, were not then adulterated with any of those vain rites or visionary errors, which have since broke the peace of the church, and betrayed her misled members again into the cloisters of a disguised idolatry; or to the dark labyrinths of a not less fanatic enthusiasm. This truly pious lady, who had visited the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, and stood under the shrine in Rome, where St. Peter suffered martyrdom, revered both; but she believed that the temples yet to be raised in many a pagan breast, was a work of still more sacred structure. She accordingly introduced the pure faith she brought into every British female circle, where her rank commanded respect, and her virtues influence. Her success was beyond even her hopes. Indeed the female heart seems a soil particularly prepared for this seed of tender planting, yet ordained for the "healing of nations!" Even on its natural softness, which one of our own authors beautifully styles the *soft green of the soul*, the world-scared eye of man loves to turn his wearied sight, and be refreshed. This refreshment has its



well-springs in meekness and endearing soothing; a reflected light of heaven—warmth without heat—bright, but innoxious.

On this principle Helena gently taught the daughters of her native land. Where she found the old Roman philosophy had ingrafted the sweetness of urbanity, on the proud virtues of either paganism, whether of the Druid grove or classic temple, she transmuted all into the dignified humility of christian holiness.

During Helena's two abodes here, first as empress-consort, and then as empress-mother, she erected many noble works in London, and amongst those of the most after utility, completely rebuilt the old walls of that city, which had suffered much from dilapidation since the time of their first erection, in the earliest age of the Roman colony. Historians inform us, that it was by this truly imperial woman that the great stone pillar, known in our time by the name of the *London Stone*, was placed in a secure niche of the new wall. It had originally been planted on that spot by the first Roman colony, and called the *Milliarium*—the grand point of station, whence these bold settlers measured the relative distances to all their other posts throughout the country. This venerable relic still remains; and, where the site of the ancient bulwarks may still be traceable, it appears prominent in a yet more modern wall.\*

After the munificent dedications of her time and wealth, which the Empress Helena bestowed on the embellishments of London, the inhabitants changed its name to that of *Augusta*—a compliment applicable to the respected empress, or to the city itself, as the most important one in the island. But it was not the edification of "houses built with hands" that could satisfy her parental spirit; and from the period in

\* "The legend concerning this stone, which supposes that whoever possesses it must be lord of the place where it stands, seems to imply something more than what is conveyed in the idea of its mile-measuring date. Therefore it probably may have had some such still more remote history; as that connected with the Scone Stone, now in the seat of the royal chair at Westminster Abbey which was considered a kind of palladium wherever it stood; and for that reason was transferred from Scotland into England by Edward I."—*Roman Ladies in Britain*.



their prince to compromise his dignity by a union with a princess of tainted blood, as was notoriously the case in the present instance. Joan was an illegitimate daughter of the reigning English king. Her mother was the Lady Agatha, daughter of Robert Ferrars, earl of Derby; one of the many degraded noble dames of England who disgraced their families by an illicit connexion with the most unworthy of the sovereigns of England. The dowry which her royal father gave with her was as contemptible as her pretensions to lineal honours; merely the lordship of Elsmere, in the marches of Wales; a territory originally torn from the ancestors of Llewelyn.\*

Notwithstanding the private felicity enjoyed by the Welsh prince with his new queen, their union signally failed in producing those pacific results anticipated between the two nations. A furious war soon ensued, which was carried on with mutual animosity. Llewelyn and his patriotic followers had not only to sustain an opposition to the entire military strength of England, but the treachery of many of his own subjects caused the terrors of a partial civil war combined with those of foreign invasion. The natural result of such disastrous evils was the success of his enemies, and the failure of the Cambrian prince to defend his dominions against such superior forces. When the army of King John had carried their devastations to an unprecedented extreme, while Bangor was blazing and Aberconway in the power of the English, Llewelyn led his retreating powers into security amidst the fastnesses of Snowdon. From thence he despatched his queen attended by the usual retinue of a truce, to Aberconway, the head quarters of her father the king, to intercede with him for a treaty of peace. Although Joan failed to obtain all the points desired by her lord, she succeeded in procuring a

\* It is with the utmost disgust that a Welshman will read the following statement by Warrington of the occurrences of the year 1203. "The English king having lost a great part of his territories in France returned to England. On his arrival he gave Joan, a daughter which he had by a lady of the house of Ferrars, in marriage to Llewelyn; as a reward of the due observance of the late treaty; or as a means of securing those advantages which he might think would naturally result from such an alliance."

cessation of hostilities, which was the grand desideratum of the perilous hour: for in fact each party, at all times, seemed to subscribe to hard terms with a mental reservation to break them, as soon as the evil hour had passed away, and a change of fortune enabled them once more to re-fight their battles under better auspices.

Joan soon became the mother of a prince who was named David. It is not known how early after his birth that she began to play the part of the harsh stepmother towards Griffith, Llewelyn's eldest son, but in course of a few years afterwards it is certain that she had succeeded in her grand aim of alienating the affections of his father from him, and of transferring them to his second son, the young prince of whom we are treating, her own child.

This is, perhaps, the right place to relate a romantic incident, said to have taken place during the infancy of Prince David, that has long been the subject of a popular ballad called *Bedd Gelart*. The tradition goes that on one occasion Llewelyn and his courtiers were enjoying the pleasures of the chase, a damp was thrown upon their enjoyment in consequence of the unaccountable absence of one of the best dogs in all the pack, a buck-hound that was a great favourite with his master, presented to him by his royal father-in-law, called *Kill-hart*, which soon after his arrival in Wales was Welshified into *Gelart*. The party soon separated, disappointed of their sport, and returned homeward. When Llewelyn entered his dwelling, it appears that the whole of his household were absent; but he was greeted by the leaping gambols of *Gelart* the moment he appeared. Observing the cradle of his child turned upside down, the dog's mouth and the floor stained with blood, a horrible suspicion seized him that the hound had killed his infant. As the animal leapt on him to invite his usual caresses, maddened with the thought of his supposed bereavement and furious at the sight of the apparent cause, he immediately spurned the fondling creature, and thrust him through with his hunting spear; when the poor animal gave a piteous whine and fell dead at his master's feet. On turning up the inverted cradle, however, how great was Llewelyn's astonishment.

*Chenopodium francis*

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